

under contemplation. But the period of retrenchment came in and because of that the project was given up. Similarly, the project between Kandwa and Hingoli was also dropped, but it was taken up later and was completed. But the Amravati-Narkhed line was not taken up at all. About this line, Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh made a long speech during the last budget session. I therefore urge upon the Government the necessity of taking up the work. Narkhed is a station on the Nagpur-Itarsi line. As it is, there is no connection over long distances in this area in the whole of the four districts. The Bhusawal-Nagpur line is the only line existing now. The two lines which I just now mentioned would be the connecting links in this area. Though it is a fertile tract and is a growing, prosperous area, there is no adequate railway connection there. I therefore request that the Narkhed-Amravati line may also be taken up and completed soon.

Having said this much about the railway lines of local interest, I proceed to make some other points. If you can give me about ten minutes more I would be able to cover those points.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He can continue tomorrow. The House will now take up the half-hour discussion.

16.58 hrs.

INDIAN AIRLINES CORPORATION*

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla (Mahasamund): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir I rise to initiate a discussion on points arising out of the answer given on the floor of this House on the Viscount crash near Agra on the 11th September, 1963. All the passengers abroad were killed and because of the nature of the crash, in spite of the thorough enquiry, no exact reason could be determined why this crash

occurred. But Justice Khosla, a retired Judge of the Punjab High Court, who was appointed as the court of enquiry reveals in his report an astounding and criminal negligence by the Indian Airlines Corporation towards passenger safety in air travel in India.

I will give you a few examples as have been reported by Justice Khosla in his report which has been laid on the Table of the House. Justice Khosla has mentioned that the snag reports which are given by the commanders of the aircraft and which are supposed to be attended to immediately most often not only go unattended to, but are also suppressed. He has also given an instance here, in which a serious snag report was sought to be forged and converted into a good report by the IAC, irrespective of the fact that this could have caused a major aircraft loss and accident, and loss of valuable supplies and parts. I would like to quote some passages from the Khosla report itself.

Justice Khosla says:

"With regard to the matter of snags, a most deplorable practice came to the notice of the Court. Copies of snag-sheets are sent to the office of the Director General of Civil Aviation, and some officials of the Indian Airlines Corporation made an attempt to suppress information and to 'doctor' the snag reports".

17 hrs.

It goes on to give a specific example of how this was done: This is the testimony given before Justice Khosla by the Controller of Aeronautical Inspection:

"When our officer scrutinised Eng. 16 form, he found that two reports dated 18th and 19th were missing. He made a note of that on the notesheet as well as he rang up the Chief Inspector to forward Eng. 16

*Half an hour discussion.

[Shri Vidya Charan Shukla]

of 18th and 19th immediately. One of my Senior Clerks happened to go to the Indian Airlines Corporation for some work. There he met the clerk of the Chief Inspector who asked as to what had happened to the extension of hours of VT-DLZ. Our clerk told him that since Eng. form 16 of 18th and 19th are not received no extension can be granted and the case is pending. It appears that he got those forms from the Chief Inspector and had them in his hands and he immediately handed over to our clerk to expedite the extension. My Senior Clerk submitted these to the concerned officer. When he checked those, unfortunately what happened was that with those Eng. forms 16 that my clerk had brought, was the draft which the Chief Inspector had given for fair typing. So many officer saw those and noticed that he had made some corrections on it".—

Some corrections were forged into it—

"It was brought to my notice. In the mean time, the clerk who had given the Eng. form 16 came running to my office and contacted my Senior Clerk and begged him to give the draft form back. So that clerk came to me and told me that he was weeping, that he would lose his job if he does not get the forms back. I said, all right, ask him to come after two hours. In the mean time I told my officer to go and get photostat copy of this form made from the Technical Centre. We got the photostat copy and returned the draft form. I thought it was a very serious affair and I informed the Headquarters and I went myself and saw the Director of Aeronautical Inspection who took me to the the Deputy Director-General (T) and he took me to the Director General. They too thought that it was a very serious thing and the matter should be taken up".

This shows how the IAC tackles air safety measures in the aeroplanes by which most of us have to fly often.

Another thing that Mr. Justice Khosla has commented upon in a very severe manner in his report is the through-flight check of the night air mail aircraft at Nagpur. The IAC have placed an inspector to check aeroplanes that fly to Nagpur from Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. In the checking forms that were put before Justice Khosla of the plane that crashed near Agra, he found that the checking engineer never checked the plane. He only initialled and where it was mentioned Inspector, only a mechanic had signed the form and the gentleman in charge, one Shri Pandit, had initialled them later on. I will again quote from the report of Justice Khosla to show how badly the IAC handle this matter. Justice Khosla says:

"The manner in which the through-flight check of the Night Air Mail aircraft is carried out at Nagpur surprises me not a little. The check is carried out so hurriedly and in such a perfunctory manner that it cannot serve any useful purpose. Indeed, in my view, it cannot be considered a check at all".

In this respect, he again mentions about a very serious matter. IAC posted one Shri Pandit as the checking inspector there. When the Director General of Civil Aviation found that he did not possess the necessary qualifications to check the Viscount aircraft, they moved the IAC to post a better qualified flight engineer there. They countered this move by the DGCA by saying that the Viscounts are flown to Nagpur only as a matter of emergency sometimes and otherwise most of the time Skymasters operate. On this the DGCA gave them an extension of three months saying that within three months Shri Pandit should obtain the necessary certification of his competence to deal with

Viscounts; otherwise they should put another engineer who is capable of doing this. This was in 1959. Those three months elapsed. Viscounts came to be firmly established in the Delhi-Nagpur-Madras and back route. They were flying all the time in this route. Still this gentleman who was not competent to check Viscount aircraft was kept there. Although Justice Khosla has not said so, it is the general view, and it is also my view, that the Viscount crashed near Agra just because the proper kind of attention of checking was not given at Nagpur.

The court of enquiry also commented very strongly on the position of spare parts that are maintained at Nagpur. The spare parts that are required to be maintained are given out in the international form. Any scheduled airline operating passenger service has to maintain these spare parts at the through checking centres. The Indian Airlines Corporation reported to the court of enquiry that they did not maintain these spare parts in Nagpur just because they were not needed. Sir, it is only commonsense that these accidents do not happen every time and they happen only once in a way, and we should do everything to avoid them. If there is a snag in the aeroplane which requires a change of some part and if that part is not available at Nagpur there is no other go except to carry on further with that minor snag which may develop into a major snag while in flight. This has been happening in Nagpur and this is what Justice Khosla has said in his report.

Sir, Justice Khosla has said certain things in his report about which we do not know what action has been taken by the Government. No information is available to us whether the Government has taken any action to remedy all those defects pointed out by Justice Khosla. He has said in his report:

"A certain degree of confusion regarding the acceptable and non-acceptable efficiency of Viscount aircraft still exists".

During the inquiry he did not find any document which gave clear instructions to the commanders of aircraft when to go and when not to go, when to fly and when not to fly. When the Commission of Enquiry pressed for this, a circular was produced by the Indian Airlines Corporation but on further enquiry it was found that that circular given by the Indian Airlines Corporation to Justice Khosla was not approved by the DGCA. Justice Khosla has mentioned this in his report. Capt. Jaffer Ali who appeared before Justice Khosla on behalf of the Indian Airlines Corporation was ignorant of this circular. Justice Khosla asked him whether he knew of any instruction by the IAC when to go and when not to go as far as aircraft are concerned, he said that he had absolutely no idea. When a competent pilot like Capt. Jaffer did not know about this it is safe to presume that most of the pilots in the Indian Airlines Corporation did not know the existence of this circular. I do not know from where it was brought and put before Justice Khosla.

Before I come to an end, I would bring to your notice that between 1959 and 1963, 21 serious accidents have taken place in our country which were unsolved or only partially solved and explained. This number of unsolved air accidents is increasing in our country. We must do something about this matter so that our air travel becomes safer.

Shri R. S. Pandey (Guna): Who is the person at the Nagpur airport who is obliged to make a complete check before he gives the certificate for the plane to fly?

The Minister of Civil Aviation (Shri Kanungo): It was one of the very tragic accidents that took place where the entire body of passengers and crew were killed in Agra. Because of this and because of the complete destruction of many parts of the aircraft, it was not possible to find out what exactly had happened.

[Shri Kanungo]

Therefore, the court of inquiry, while thoroughly going into it had to eliminate 15 possibilities under which such an accident could happen and it came to the conclusion that it could not be positively established that it was due to any of these possibilities. It is common knowledge in aviation circles that when there is total destruction it is not possible to get any sufficient evidence for any theory. In any case, the available evidence and the report itself will show how meticulously the court went into the matter. The laboratory experiments, the opinion of the representatives of the manufacturers and other relevant evidence were gone into. Yet, it was not possible to find out the actual reasons for this regrettable accident. It is common knowledge that when such accidents take place the exact reasons are difficult to find out.

The deficiencies which have been pointed out by Justice Khosla have been taken note of as will be found from the resolution of the Government which was placed on the Table of the House along with that report.

I will now take them *seriatim*. My hon. friend referred to snag reports. Snags are of various kinds. Some are permissible and can be carried over; but such snags have got to be specifically authorised by the civil aviation authorities. Generally, the snag reports go to the DGCA as a matter of routine and the DGCA issue circulars which have the effect of law or regulations, under which certain permissible snags are allowed while others are not allowed. If a certain snag is not dangerous, it can be carried forward; but if it is a crucial one, the aircraft has got to be grounded. The commanders who are responsible for the safety of the aircraft and the passengers are generally very much aware of the seriousness of the various snags. In fact, the nature of their training is such

that they can easily and quickly find out under what circumstances they can fly and under what circumstances they cannot fly. Apart from that, even if an experienced commander or engineer feels that a certain snag is minor and he can safely undertake the flight, he is not allowed to do so if the DGCA has not permitted that snag. After the report of Justice Khosla it has been thoroughly examined whether the permissible snags should be reduced or amended, what is to be done; also, whether certain amount of these should be written in the regulations or not. That is one of the points which is under consideration now.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: Still!

Shri Kanungo: Still.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: What about the snag that was suppressed?

Shri Kanungo: I am coming to that. One swallow does not make a summer and one slacking officer does not damn the Corporation. In this particular instance, the allegation is—mind you, this is the allegation placed before the Court by the officer of the DGCA—that one of the officers of the Corporation was guilty of doctoring the snag reports. It is quite possible that a particular officer of the Corporation was guilty. But as far as the public and the Government are concerned, they can be assured and have been assured by the inquiry in the Court that the DGCA's organisation is alert enough to check and detect any doctoring or fiddling with the reports.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: You have to defend the IAC and not the DGCA.

Shri Kanungo: DGCA and IAC, everybody is to serve the travelling public.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: Kindly limit yourself to the I.A.C. There was no criticism of the DGCA.

Shri Kanungo: Kindly let me continue. Please do not interrupt me. If you have got anything more, you can table another motion.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: Do not allow that.

Shri Shinkre (Marmagoa): These charges have been levelled against the I.A.C. and not against the D.G.C.A. Your reply also must cover the I.A.C. and not the D.G.C.A.

Shri Kanungo: The point I am trying to make out is that the D.G.C.A.'s organisation is alert enough to detect any such misbehaviour on the part of the officers of any of the carriers. Of course, I am responsible for the operation of the I.A.C. also.

Shri Shinkre: Through the DGCA.

Shri Kanungo: Both. But I am indirectly responsible for the working of the I.A.C.; therefore, I say that it is a lapse by an individual officer. These things happen in a huge organisation and these are things on which we tighten up. Such incidents have not been repeated. It has not been detected in spite of vigilance of the D.G.C.A. which has been proved. Therefore there is no reason to assume that such fraudulent action are a common or usual feature. This is what I want to point out that there is enough vigilance to prevent such actions.

Then the question was about the flight inspection at Nagpur. It is true that on that particular fateful night the flight inspector was not licensed as a flight engineer for Viscounts. But according to the Corporation and according to the D.G.C.A. he was an experienced officer and he could be entrusted with inspections. Justice Khosla has also commented that the inspection at Nagpur is rather perfunctory. Assuming that the time is so short that there cannot be full inspection, the Corporation and the D.G.C.A. have gone into it and

they feel that 20 minutes' check is good enough at Nagpur for any flying aircraft on flight. In this case there was time enough.

The fact that the particular officer allowed the mechanic to do the job and signed himself was wrong.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: That is wrong or the action is wrong.

Shri Kanungo: It was wrong because the inspector is expected to certify what he has inspected. There is no reason.....

श्री हुकम चन्द कश्यप (देवास) :
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरी भावना का स्वागत
है। हाउस में कोरम नहीं है।

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The bell is being rung . . . Now there is quorum.

Shri Kanungo: Certainly, it was a dereliction of duty by a particular officer by signing a report without verifying it himself. Disciplinary action has been taken against him and the Corporation has taken steps to see that adequate inspection is done by qualified engineers. I may tell you that we have got a variety of aircraft with the I.A.C. and to have flight inspections, it will cost a heavy sum. But it is necessary and it should be done.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: Only two aircrafts at Nagpur.

Shri Kanungo: Not only two aircrafts; we have got various models in Nagpur. It has got to be done everywhere. This is a right suggestion. It means that a particular engineer who has got to inspect a particular aircraft must be certified for that particular make of the aircraft.

The other question was with regard to the stocking of spare parts. It is not possible to anticipate the

[Shri Kanungo]

stocks to be placed anywhere. The I.A.C., according to the nature of their operations, stock their aircraft parts as they feel justified and as specified by the manufacturers. The D.G.C.A. goes by the manufacturers' suggestions also. It depends upon the number of aircrafts flying on a particular route and in the type of snags developed, it is quite possible, and sometimes it happens, that fast-moving have got to be replaced and replaced quicker than they are replaced in the stock. That might happen. But this is a possibility which the I.A.C. is trying its best to overcome by placing enough spares. It has done so in the case of almost all the aircrafts. After all, the Nagpur airport has got only very few

flights as against other airports where the number of flights is much more.

I would submit that Justice Khosla's Report has given us indications as to which are the deficiencies. Out of 8 recommendations which Justice Khosla has made, 5 have already been attended to and 3 are under consideration.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

17.25 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, March 11, 1965/Phalguna 20, 1886 (Saka).