

If a person sells his house for which he realises Rs. 25,000, we shall not assess the capital gains earned thereon provided he is a person who does not own probably more than two houses or does not, at any rate, has a house of the value of Rs. 50,000 in the aggregate. I have tabled that amendment in pursuance of the promise that I gave to the House when I brought these Bills forward.

I do not think it is necessary for me, at the present stage, to dilate further in regard to the provisions of the Bill. I have no doubt that the hon. Members would scan the Bills and dissect them and expose the defects in them and ask for an explanation when necessary. I am also sure in my mind that the hon. Members would like to go beyond the Bills themselves and also to the general economic situation which in part happens to be the justification for my producing these measures. I do hope to be able to receive very valuable advice from such hon. Members as would intervene in the debate. So far as I am concerned, I have been promised a rich fare, and the hon. Members have asked 8½ hours to discuss this motion. I am not saying it in a light spirit, but I do feel that at the present moment, the task that we have set ourselves to is such, that any constructive advice that comes from any hon. Member from any quarter will be highly welcome and it would be treated with a great deal of respect and would be examined and utilised to the extent that it is possible for us to do. Therefore, at the present moment, I shall content myself with these preliminary remarks and I commend these two Bills for the consideration of the House.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** Which is the amendment that has been tabled by the hon. Minister to cover the cases about the selling of one house, etc.? Is it a new amendment?

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** I do not think it has come. It has just now come, I think, to me. It will be available to the hon. Members.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** It is not circulated.

**Mr. Chairman:** It will be circulated to the Members.

Motions moved:

(1) "That the Bill to increase or modify the rates of duty on certain goods imported into India and to impose duties of excise on certain goods produced or manufactured in India and to increase the stamp duty on bills of exchange, be taken into consideration".

(2) "That the Bill further to amend the Indian Income-tax Act, 1922, for the purpose of imposing a tax on capital gains and for certain other purposes and to prescribe the rate of super-tax on companies for the financial year 1957-58, be taken into consideration".

MOTION RE REPORT OF GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR OF RAILWAYS ON DERAILMENT OF 319 DOWN EXPRESS.

**Mr. Chairman:** The House will now proceed with the motion to be moved by Shri Feroze Gandhi.

14.59 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

**Shri Feroze Gandhi** (Pratapgarh Distt.—West cum Rae Bareli Distt.—East): I beg to move:

"That the Report of the Government Inspector of Railways on the derailment of 319 Down Express at a girder bridge between Jangaon and Raghunathpalli stations on the 27th September, 1954, resulting in the death of 136 persons be taken into consideration".

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao** (Khammam): Sir, this report by the Government Inspector of Railways comes under the Ministry of Communications. I would like to know whether both the Ministers will reply to this debate or only one Minister, that is, the Railway Minister. The report, as it is before

[Shri T. B. Vittal Rao]

us, is made by an official who is under the Ministry of Communications.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I will find that out. Meanwhile, the mover can go on with his speech.  
15 hrs.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the disaster at Jangaon-Raghunathapalli, which occurred on the 27th September 1954 was the biggest in the history of the Indian Railways. My point in raising this discussion is that the report of the Government Inspector of Railways reveals that the accident could have been averted. The accident to the 319 Down Express occurred as a result of the failure of bridge No. 393. The bridge failed as a result of 2 out of 3 of its piers having sunk due to scour at the foundations. According to the report of the Inspector, the foundation of these two piers was not deep enough to withstand the flood on the 27th September 1954. The Government Inspector also states that had the piers been founded on rock or mooram, the accident would have been averted. Now, what was the depth of the foundation of these two piers? There were three piers in the bridge Nos. 1, 2 and 3. It was No. 3 pier which did not sink or give way. The foundation was at the depth of 15.25 feet, below the bed level of the river and was resting on hard mooram. This depth in the case of piers Nos. 1 and 2 was only 6½ feet. The Government Inspector's report states that the strata below the foundation of these two piers was not hard soil. If the foundation was not rock, if it was not mooram and if it was not hard soil, then I ask, what else is there in a river?

[Mr. Deputy-Speaker, piers Nos. 1 and 2 of bridge 393 were resting on sand of 2.05 mm. grade. This is revealed in the report.]

**Shri Mulchand Dube** (Farrukhabad Distt.—North): When was the bridge built?

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** I will come to that later. The bridge was opened to traffic in 1886; it was damaged three

times before 1907, then in 1908, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1918, 1920 and 1937. Then in 1939 the flood level touched the bottom of the girders and pier No. 3 was washed away. This pier was rebuilt in 1940, and its foundation was taken down to a depth of 15.25 feet. The other piers were left just as they were. There is not a shadow of doubt that this bridge was vulnerable. If I may say so, it was dangerously vulnerable. The railway was taken over from the Nizam in April 1950 according to the statement laid on the Table of the House by the Deputy Minister and was in charge of our engineers, and it was their duty to have checked up and tested the lines and bridges according to the rules laid down in the Indian Railway Code. By this, I mean, the rules under which a line under construction is declared as an "open line" and certain formalities are gone through before it can be opened to traffic.

I would like to say a word about the river. The river Yashwantpuram in the immediate vicinity of the bridge is 400 feet wide and the linear waterway under the bridge is 76 feet. It is obvious that there was severe constriction under the bridge. The question arises whether the design of the bridge was defective, and if so, how did the Chief Engineer certify it as fit for open-line traffic? That it was a defective piece of engineering is borne out by the findings of Shri Joglekar, Director of Central Water and Power Research Station, who was consulted by the Government Inspector. According to Shri Joglekar, the waterway at the bridge should be designed to cater for a normal maximum discharge of 20,000 cubic feet per second. I emphasize the words "normal maximum discharge". This has nothing to do with the rains on the 27th September, 1954; whether they were heavy or light, I am not concerned. The waterway required for this normal maximum discharge would be 376 feet. Against the required waterway of 376

feet, the actual waterway under the bridge was only 76 feet. I want to emphasize this point.

Commenting on the history of the bridge, the Government Inspector stated:

"Had a proper appreciation of the maximum flood discharge been made in 1940, the entire bridge might have been rebuilt and additional waterway provided."

The Inspector arrived at the following conclusion:

"I am of opinion that in 1940 the railway administration should have rebuilt the abutment and piers 1 and 2 on deeper foundations, when such a course was adopted for the construction of pier No. 3."

The design of the bridge was so palpably wrong that it passes my comprehension as to how it was allowed to go unnoticed by our railway engineers, whose duty it was to ensure the safety of the permanent way and the structures on the permanent way. The railway administration has thrown the responsibility for the accident on the shoulders of those who built the bridge in 1940, I would like to ask the questions: Supposing the Jamna bridge collapses tomorrow...

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): God forbid.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: You had better be careful, but only a few months ago, it might have; supposing the bridge collapses tomorrow, whom are we going to blame? On whom are we going to fix the responsibility? Shall we dig up the man from the grave who built it, probably 70 or 80 years ago...?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Who predicts it?

Shri Feroze Gandhi: I was only giving this illustration that we cannot blame those who built these bridges. The Railway Board has taken up the

responsibility for the thorough upkeep and efficiency of these bridges, and therefore to say that somebody built it in 1940 and another person built it in 1920 would not be good or correct.

My next point is this: Was the history of this bridge and the fact that it was a vulnerable site known to the railway engineers and I would like the Railway Administration to speak for itself. During the evidence before the Government Inspector of Railways, the permanent-way gangman stated that he was aware of the fact that the bridge had once collapsed and the river was susceptible to sudden and severe flood. Next comes the permanent way Inspector. He stated that he considered the bridge as a vulnerable point requiring special watch. Next comes the Divisional Engineer Shri R. Butt. The Divisional Engineer had made a remark in the bridge register in March 1952 that the bridge required to be watched. Later, he explained away this remark by saying that I verbally told my assistant engineer; what I meant by this was an ordinary inspection that goes on. The Divisional Engineer Shri Aibara in 1940 had recommended additional spans of 20 feet each and raising of the bridge girders. Another engineer, Shri Allen had recommended an additional span, I think, of 40 feet and raising the girders by 4 feet. It was not done because the Chief Engineer rejected their advice. I would like the House to pay attention to what two of the highest officers in the railway have to say. I am reading from the evidence. The Deputy Chief Engineer who held charge of the south zone inspected this section in 1953 when he also examined the bridge inspection register; but, the pages concerning this bridge escaped his attention. He is the second highest officer on the Central Railway.

3.10 P. M.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair] ..

Before I deal with the responsibility of the Chief Engineer, I would like to read out para. 103 from the Indian

[Shri Feroze Gandhi]

Railway Code. The edition is 1952 and as far as I am aware, no later edition has been brought out. This is the responsibility of the Chief Engineer:

"He is the administrative and professional head of his department, for the efficient and economical working of which he is responsible. It is his duty to see that adequate and detailed rules exist or are prescribed in departmental manuals for the efficient maintenance and renewal of all open line structural works and that the permanent way, the bridges, the signals and other structures of the railway are actually maintained at the standard required to satisfy the Government Inspector of Railways. At the close of every year, the Chief Engineer is required to append a certificate to the annual report of the railway that the permanent way and other structural works on the railway had been maintained efficiently."

This is the responsibility of the Chief Engineer. What did he say before the Government Inspector? The Chief Engineer was not aware of the history of this bridge and consequently the question of prescribing the safety limit for the flood level of this bridge was not considered by him. Amongst the Deputy Chief Engineer and the Chief Engineer, one says that during the inspection the pages escaped his attention. The other says that the history of the bridge was not known to him. May I ask, how the Chief was ensuring the efficiency of this bridge without knowing its history? For 4½ years this railway was in our possession. It was taken over in April, 1950. The evidence of the Chief Engineer is something like saying that the history of the most dangerous criminal was unknown to the Police Commissioner.

On the face of this report, it would appear that the main cause for this disaster was the smugness and complacency of highly placed engineers whose responsibility was to ensure the

safety of the permanent way. I will read from the Way and Works Manual of the Indian Railways. Para. 1101 dealing with behaviour of rivers says:

"The Divisional/District Engineer and Assistant Engineer should acquaint themselves with the past history of every important bridge and its protection works and the behaviour of the river, in order to ensure its safe condition."

This is laid down under the rules. The only two engineers to whom the history of the bridge was not known happened to be the Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief Engineer. The main cause for this disaster is, I repeat, the smugness and complacency of highly placed officials. It was their responsibility to see that the permanent way is safely maintained and also efficiently maintained.

I would like to say a word about the Railway Board. It is the supreme executive of the Indian Railways. I would like to read out from the Chief Inspector of Railways Report about the Railway Board and their powers:

"The Railway Board still continue to exercise the powers of the Central Government under the Indian Railways Act and after considering the Government Inspector of Railways' recommendations, accord sanction to work bearing on the safety of the travelling public such as opening of new lines for the carriage of passengers, use of new locomotives, rolling stock...." etc.

They are the supreme authority and they too must share the responsibility. They cannot escape their share of responsibility in so far as the Board failed to ask the Chief Inspector of Railways to test the bridges at the time of taking over from the Nizam in April, 1950. If the Railway Board relied on the safety of bridges as they existed on the Nizam's railway, then they must bear their share of the responsibility for the first biggest disaster in the history of the Indian Railways.

I want to say something about what my hon. friend, Mr. Anthony, said the other day. Everybody tries to thrust the responsibility on the smallest; whenever you cannot blame anyone, you get hold of the ohprasi. Mr. Anthony threw the responsibility the other day on class IV staff and referred to the indiscipline among them. I would like to read out the duties of the patrolmen. Even the Chief Inspector of Railways came to the conclusion that this was not humanly possible to perform. The recommendation of the Chief Inspector of Railways was that the beats of patrolmen or the number of their rounds containing as much as 18 miles walk per night should be reduced. Remember, it is 18 miles walk in rain and storm; whether he has worked in the day time or not, he should go. What would the man be paid for it? The rule which was in force on the 27th September, 1954, was that "the Muccadam and the gangman, who attend to such patrolling work shall be paid extra wages at the rate of 4 annas and 2 annas and 8 pies respectively per night". 4 annas to the Muccadam and 2 annas and 8 pies to the gangman were the rates for patrolling. These were the rules enforced at that time. Why were these rules enforced, I ask. It was because the Chief Engineer could not enforce the Way and Works Manual of the Indian Railways. This is what the Chief Engineer said. The Chief Engineer, Shri N. M. Thadani, said that the Ways and Works Manual issued by the Railway Board in April this year, i.e. 9 months ago, had not yet been fully implemented. With a view to implement the Manual fully, the individual chapters were being examined by the deputies in the meantime.

I would like to read out how a patrolman patrols. This is very important and it is laid down in the Way and Works Manual of the Indian Railways.

"Para. 1712. Patrolman on each permanent way inspector's section should be consecutively from one

section to the other. Each patrolman and watchman shall be provided with the following equipment which he has to carry: One staff, one tin containing 12 detonators, one tricolour hand signal lamp, one hurricane lamp, one set of hand signal flags, patrol book and one extra tin."

Only Goddess Durga can do this.

I do not want to take more of the time of the House. I can do no better than repeat what the Prime Minister said the other day, that explanations will be given and excuses found, but no excuse is good enough.

**Mr. Speaker:** Motion moved: *Continued*

"That the Report of the Government Inspector of Railways on the derailment of 319 Down Express at a girder bridge between Jangaon and Raghunathapalli Stations on the 27th September, 1954, resulting in the death of 136 persons, be taken into consideration."

**Shri Nambiar (Mayuram):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a sorrowful heart that I have to approach the issue. After the able speech made by Shri Feroze Gandhi, difficulty is less for us. But, I would say that after the accident of 27th November, 1954, which we are discussing now, we have had two further accidents, one in September, 1956 and the latest one on 23rd November, 1956.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** May I interrupt and ask whether I will have a right to reply to the Minister? That is why I have finished quickly.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall consider the request.

**Shri Nambiar:** After the submission of this report by the Inspector in December, 1954, two years have passed and nothing has been done to improve the permanent way and the duties of the Engineering department. This is obviously clear. Otherwise, the Mehboobnagar accident and the latest Ariyalur accident would not have happened. Shri Feroze Gandhi has explained clearly what are the duties of the Engineering department from top

[Shri Nambiar]

to bottom. If these things were not enough to safeguard the railway line, they should have put more men on the line and they should have improved the vigilance and then they could have averted this tragedy. It is very clear that they have not done it.

Coming to the report of the Inspector, he holds nobody responsible primarily. This is his report. He says that the accident might have been averted if the P.W. gang had gone out on patrol duty—I am quoting—'but I do not consider that it could have been averted by the patrolman according to the timings prescribed for him.' If what he submitted was correct and if it was properly understood by the Railway Board, the Railway Board would have improved the vigilance. They should have ordered the District Engineer to be on the line when there is heavy rain. They should have asked the Engineering department to appoint more patrolmen. In the case of the latest Ariyalur accident, from the statement that the hon. Minister made in this House, it was clear that only one patrolman was on duty between Ariyalur and Kallagam on one side and another patrolman on the other side. For 10 miles these two men were walking and two trips a night. They were making 20 miles of walking. If the report of the previous Jangaon accident had been looked into, the same patrolling method would not have been there in Ariyalur and the Ariyalur tragedy could have been averted.

Not only that. In Ariyalur, the Tehsildar of the locality gave information on the previous day that tanks were breaching and therefore vigilance should be improved on the railway line. In spite of that, the P.W. Inspector or the Sub-Inspector did not care to trolley their section and find out the trouble. It was exactly three miles from the headquarters of the P.W. Inspector and the Sub-Inspector that the accident took place, when the P.W. Inspector and the Sub-Inspector

were safely sleeping at home. They never cared that there was rain all the three days. They never cared to go on the line.

**Shri Alagesan:** Are we discussing the Hyderabad accident or.

**Mr. Speaker:** We are discussing the Mehboobnagar accident.

**Shri Nambiar:** We are discussing the Jangaon accident that occurred two years ago. The Jangaon report is now before the House for discussion.

**Mr. Speaker:** Not Ariyalur.

**Shri Nambiar:** Why I am submitting about Ariyalur accident here is, if, from the facts made available in this report in December, 1954, the Railway Board and the Engineers had realised their responsibilities and corrected the mistake, this Ariyalur or the Mehboobnagar accident would not have happened.

Not only that. These officers neglected their duty. Train accident occurred. After the accident, they never learnt a lesson, they never corrected themselves. Not only that, they erect an iron curtain around them and they never allow others to understand things. They never allow, or reluctantly agree to have a judicial enquiry. In the Mehboobnagar case, a judicial enquiry was not allowed. They said that Inspector's report will be pursued by a judicial person. Here also in Ariyalur, they reluctantly allowed it. We are not sure whether the judicial enquiry is going to be an open enquiry or a secret enquiry as it was done in Kalka. Here, the responsibility of the Board is such that they would not allow even the public to know the matter. If the public had an opportunity to know that this was the situation in which the Jangaon accident happened, the public would have pressed on the Railway Board and the Government and the Railway Ministry to improve the situation and these two tragedies could have been averted. That is exactly why I submit that the Railway Board is to be primarily held responsible. The Railway Board must

[Shri Nambiar] be held responsible. The Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief Engineer must be held responsible. Not only that. The Inspectorate on the spot should have taken care to avoid such a situation.

About Class IV people, Shri Feroze Gandhi has explained. I have no brief for Class IV staff even if they neglect their duty. Here, from the evidence and from the facts marshalled by the Inspector, you cannot fix the responsibility on Class IV staff because he says that even the patrolman could not have avoided it. Therefore, if you do not exactly find out the culprit, if you don't find out the real cause of the accident and if you run after a shadow, after the most under-dog, if you hunt after the shadow, you won't get the real person and you won't correct the mistake. Thereby you will allow more accidents to occur and more people will die. That is the difficulty. It is not a question of defending the interests of Class IV staff. It is a question of finding out the exact person who is responsible. That is why I submit that in the case of Jangaon as well as in the case of Ariyalur, where I know personally, it is the persons who are higher up who are responsible, from the facts, not at my command, on my own initiative, but from the facts submitted by the hon. Minister in this very House. Therefore I submit that they must be hauled up...

**Shri Frank Anthony** (Nominated—Anglo-Indians): Hanged.

**Shri Nambiar**: If they are to be hanged, they must be hanged; there is no question. One hundred and fifty one lives in Ariyalur, is no joke. Men, women and children: their dead bodies you did not see. None of the Members here did see. I saw. It is a pathetic sight. Nobody with a human heart will be satisfied unless the men who are responsible for this are hanged literally. Why should Shri Frank Anthony hold a brief for these people, I do not understand. It is,—I may be excused—for the reason that he is a member here that is feeling so; I do

not know. I do not care for such posts or power. Such people must be hanged. I know the men who lost their wives and children refused to go away from the spot. When the doctors came and said, you must go away, they said, no, what about our wives and children, we can't go. I know mothers weeping like that. When that is the case, the persons who are responsible in the Jangaon accident, in the Mehboobnagar accident and the Ariyalur accident must be hauled up. We want to have an open enquiry. We want to be associated with the judicial enquiry. Members of Parliament or whoever it may be, non-officials. We want to see the truth. We want that such accidents should not recur in our country. That is all. We are not after anybody's blood. But, if blood is required, if certain men are to be hanged, they must be hanged, they must be hanged.

**Shri Frank Anthony**: Mr. Speaker, I waited deliberately for intervening in this debate for the hon. Communist Member to deliver himself of his speech which I expected would savour more of abuse than of sense. I do not wish to reply to the unbecoming and quite gratuitous remark that my friend, in his tirade, also directed against me. He said I hold a brief on behalf of some particular class of railwaymen. Let me say with all humility to my learned friend that he will require to traverse numerous incarnations before he learns even remotely what I have forgotten about the subordinate railwaymen, that he will require even more numerous incarnations before he attempts to challenge to represent on behalf of the subordinate railwaymen what it has been my privilege to do in the last twenty years.

What my friend has sought to do—and I expected he would seek to do it—is to use this occasion to only to beat one particular class of railway workers. I believe that I am able to bring to bear, for many reasons, an approach that it is impossible for my friend Shri Nambiar to attempt to bring to bear on these problems.

[Shri Frank Anthony]

There is always a danger of interpreting a report like this from a particular angle, of trying to press into service material in order to argue a particular point of view, and there is always this danger, because it is not a danger, it is a habit of speech with my friend Shri Nambiar of indulging in facile, unwarranted generalisations and attempting to arrive at conclusions which are not based on facts. We deplore this kind of thing, but it is never a justification for being overborne completely, for completely losing one's sense of balance or perspective. It is very easy for us after an accident of this kind to become smug, to be wise after the event, to attempt to see things, as the Americans would say, from a hind sight.

A large part of this report deals with technical matters. I will not presume, as my friend Shri Nambiar apparently has presumed, to be a technical expert and to conclude that the only conclusion or the only result at which we must arrive is to hang the Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief Engineer. The Inspector has set out the history of this bridge. He has also said that the file of the Chief Engineer dealing specifically with this particular bridge has been unfortunately lost. That file would have told us precisely the technical and other considerations which went into the particular remedial measures which were adopted in 1940. Probably my friend Shri Feroze Gandhi has some technical knowledge, but I do not wish to rush in where perhaps technical experts and engineers would be afraid to tread.

The conclusion that has been arrived at—I want to deal with this in an objective and fairly judicial manner—by the Inspector is this, that in 1940 the railway administration should have rebuilt the abutments and pier Nos. 1 and 2 on deeper foundations. He has dealt with the different categories of staff. My friend Shri Feroze Gandhi has said that obviously the Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief

Engineer must be held culpable. If that is the correct view, then I would be the first to say that they should be indicted and punished to the maximum extent. The Inspector has not given us the benefit of his views in this connection. Certainly the Chief Engineer was culpable to this extent that he apparently was not aware of the history of this bridge. The Deputy Chief Engineer also tells us that even when he looked at the Inspection Register, the part referring to this particular bridge was overlooked by him. To that extent they are certainly culpable. I am sorry there was no judicial enquiry in this matter, because a Judge aided by experts would have been able to conclude, not in the unbalanced way that my friend Shri Nambiar has concluded; he would have been able to conclude as to what is the culpability with regard to the crux of this matter on the part of the Chief Engineer. I am not holding a brief him, and say this, that there is not a tendency, there is a complex, in the railway administration; it is almost a tradition for them to cover up for their Class I officers. Much more often, and I believe with much greater capacity, I have indicted the railway administration, more often than Shri Nambiar could have ever done, for having this particular complex of covering up their Class I officers. There is this tradition for shoving the responsibility from Class I to others, and I say if we can fix the responsibility on the Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief Engineer, they should be sacked, because the higher the responsibility the higher should be the measure of punishment with which they must be visited, but let us arrive at these conclusions objectively.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** Fixing of responsibility is only possible if this report is handed over to a judicial officer. An engineer cannot do that.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** Precisely. It is only a person who approaches this judiciously, analyses precisely what is the nature of the duties of the Chief Engineer, what is the nature of the

duties of the Deputy Chief Engineer, that can come to conclusions. Assuming that the Chief Engineer was to blame for not acquainting himself with the history of this bridge, assuming that the Deputy Chief Engineer was to blame, will a judicial body say that their duties are such that they must have concluded, if they were reasonable persons, that this bridge was vulnerable? If that is the judicial finding after assessing their duties, after assessing the facts, I say the least punishment that should be meted out to the Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief Engineer is that they should be sacked. But the point is this. You have to refer it to a body that will assess the matter objectively, that will assess it accurately in the context of all the facts. I am not in a position to say that the Chief Engineer or the Deputy Chief Engineer were bound to know, if they had taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with the facts, that this bridge was dangerous. If they were, then I say the maximum punishment must be visited on them.

I regret that while we have underlined the responsibility of the Class I officers—I do not regret the underlying of their responsibility—the speeches so far tend to apologise for the responsibility of the Class IV. I do not apologise for any category of staff. I say here that we must definitely resist this tendency in the railway administration to cover up for its Class I officers. I know that there are many Class I officers who are not only lazy, not only incompetent; but they are emasculated not only physically but mentally. Get at them, punish them. But I would say this also, that as a class today—and I say it categorically—this general tendency to lack of responsibility is more pronounced among the Class IV staff, and we will be doing not only a disservice to the railway administration, we are doing an injury when we apologise in that way. I am not holding a brief, as my friend says without understanding

what he was talking about, for this class or that.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartiy (Basirhat):** As if he has all the wisdom?

**Shri Frank Anthony:** In these matters I presume to be much wiser than my friend Shri Nambiar.

**Shri Nambiar:** You are. Let the House take a decision.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** If you hold the Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief Engineer responsible, sack them. Here the Inspector—unless you believe that his report was deliberately biased—has not come to that conclusion with regard to the Chief Engineer and the Deputy Chief Engineer. He has only come to the conclusion as to the fault that was committed in 1940. What I feel is to some extent condemnable is this, that we should close our eyes to this. Here is the conclusion:

“I am of opinion that the accident might have been averted if the P.W.D. gang had gone out on patrolling duty.”

Here I feel that Shri Gandhi has misconceived the issue.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** No, Sir.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** I may be at one with him if he says that the patrolman gets only two annas, give him two rupees or four rupees a night, but the point is that the Inspector has arrived at the conclusion that this accident might have been averted if the Mukaddam and the gangmen had done their duty. That is a specific conclusion. Let us not blink at these facts as my hon. friends do, whose business is to blink at these facts.

**Shri Nambiar:** Why do you read only half the sentence? Why do you not read the full sentence?

**Shri Frank Anthony:** He says further:

“...but I do not consider that it could have been averted by Patrolman...”

My hon. friend does not even bother to analyse it.

**Shri Nambiar:** You read further.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** It is not a matter for laughing. My hon. friend has not understood it.

**Shri Nambiar:** The inspector has said that the patrolman could not have averted it.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** I can only feel sorry for my hon. friend's incapacity to understand it.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** Would you allow me to clarify it?

**Shri Frank Anthony:** I shall clarify it. After all, I have a certain legal training.

**Mr. Speaker:** The report is before all hon. Members.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** Yes, the report is before all hon. Members.

Now, what are the conclusions of the inspector with regard to patrolling? He starts at page 14 with the statement that special patrolmen were appointed. Then, he concludes at page 15 by saying that there were three special patrolmen, and each man had a beat of 2½ miles. You may say that the duties were excessive; each man had to cover his beat of 2½ miles three times after a rest of two hours. And what is the conclusion of the inspector? His conclusion is that everyone of them had lied, and that not one of these patrolmen was on duty, not one of the three special patrolmen was on duty.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** That is wrong.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** Here is the conclusion at page 15.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** I have got here the Minister's answer to my question.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** I am dealing with the report.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member may kindly note down the points.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** Are you going to give me a chance?

**Mr. Speaker:** If I cannot allow a chance later, I would not allow a chance now.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** Here is his conclusion. As I said, let us not blink at facts. Let us place the responsibility on everyone's shoulders. Here is the conclusion at page 15:

"In view of the observations in sub-para. (b) and (c), I am of the opinion that up to the time at which the accident took place, patrolling of the section between Jangaon and Raghunathpalli stations was not being done on 27th September 1954 in accordance with Circular No. 201..."

Actually, this number is a misprint. It should be circular No. 202, because that circular says:

"The Permanent Way Inspector should point out to each patrolman all portions of the road on his beat needing special notice and the Permanent Way Inspector should remind Muccadams to direct the inspection of the patrolman in a similar manner."

There were three special patrolmen appointed. And his conclusion is that they had all lied. The drivers had given their evidence that there were no patrolmen there; not one of these three patrolmen was on duty. That is one conclusion to which he arrives.

In addition to the special patrolmen, there were the gang *muccadams*. Here comes the other rule, namely subsidiary rule 213 which reads:

"Gang Muccadams should, if necessary, arrange for the patrolling of their sections if at any time in the fair season heavy rain occurs..."

Here, again, the *muccadam* has lied. Everyone has said that the rain was not only excessive, but it was excessively heavy. But the gang *muccadam* had not taken the trouble, as he was bound, to do patrolling. That is another point, apart from the fact that

there was no patrolling whatsoever either by the special patrolmen who had been appointed or by the *muccadam* and his gangmen. There was no patrolling done whatsoever, and that is why he has come to the conclusion:

"I am of the opinion that the accident might have been averted if the P.W. Gang had gone out on patrolling duty.".....

That is precisely what I have said. I said that in this House the other day, and I said that without even having looked at this report. I was talking on principle. If, in the final analysis, a bridge collapses, or a track subsides, who can prevent it? In the first instance, if you say that the Chief Engineer could have pinpointed it, he could be held responsible. But immediately, who is responsible? Who inspects the track? My hon. friend referred to the South Indian thing. There you have two gangmen to one mile. They are the men on the spot. If, instead of patrolling at night, as they are bound to patrol, they are sleeping at home, it is not the business of the P.W.D. to inspect. He has a hundred-mile-beat on the Southern Railway. It is for your two gangmen who have one mile between them to inspect every inch every day and all night, if necessary.

Here, there should have been there the three patrolmen. There should have been there the *muccadam* and his gangmen. But not one of them was on duty. That is why he has said that if they had patrolled, this accident might have been averted. That is his conclusion.

He places this guilt objectively, he fixes it on the lack of patrolling. It is not the P.W.D. or the Assistant Engineer who is supposed to patrol. As I said, let us look at these things fairly. I do not defer to anyone in my condemnation of class I officers, when it is necessary, or even of class II officers. But why do you cover up for these people who today are destroying our railways by their indiscipline and their growing sense of indiscipline? You are covering up for it. You mis-

interpret the conclusions arrived at. The only conclusion of guilt here is the conclusion of guilt against the lack of patrolling by the patrolmen. My hon. friend has only referred to one patrolman not being responsible. But the fact is that there should have been there on duty three patrolmen; then, there should have there the *muccadam* and his gangmen.

There is one other matter to which I wish to refer. I am not satisfied that the speed of the train had nothing to do with this accident. I do not say that it was the primary cause or the secondary cause. But this is a matter which must receive the attention of the Railway Administration. The inspector has concluded that this particular train was travelling at about 53 miles per hour. Now, the track is notoriously bad on these former State Railways and also on the Southern Railway. And it is my humble opinion as a layman that in many parts the track cannot carry these 'WP' engines travelling at above 50 miles per hour. In this particular case, he says that it was the usual speed, and it was travelling at about 53 miles per hour.

**Dr. Jaisoorya (Medak):** I have just heard Shri Frank Anthony, the counsel for the defence, but I have not been impressed. The reason is this. We are here today to enquire into the technical and other causes that led to the heavy losses of life, through accidents on railways. If it were one single accident, however bad it may be, it would not have caused us to think so much, but every accident where a loss of even one man's life is involved must be considered fully. We have had three such major accidents, the Jangaon accident, the Mahboobnagar accident and the Ariyalur accident.

I want you to consider the extraordinary similarity or identity of the pattern in these three accidents. In the Jangaon accident, the bridge gave way owing to heavy rains, and the train got derailed. It was absolutely the same pattern two years later at Mahboobnagar; there were heavy rains, the

[Dr. Jaisoorya]

bridge gave way and the train got derailed. So far as the Ariyalur accident is concerned, I have not seen the site, but the picture that I have been given is identical. So, if some gentleman in the Upper House gets up and says that these accidents are Acts of God, I would only say, very well, let them be accidents of God or Acts of God, but under very suspicious circumstances. It is not like that.

I am given to understand that even in totalitarian countries, they have got what they call self-criticism. Now, it will be a very salutary thing for Government's in democracies also to have a certain amount of self-criticism and not advocacy by Shri Frank Anthony, of this type. Now, let us find out what has happened. Why did it happen that there were three major disasters in the history of our railways, within a period of two and a half years. It is not a question of trying to hang somebody, but it is our duty to find out why there were three such major disasters. To my misfortune, I happen to know something about the railways. I have taken some interest in them. We have to find out whether it was due to material defect, or due to the human factor of error or gross negligence. We have to assess these things, so that in the future, we shall not be witnesses to or be guilty of such disastrous accidents. We have got only one thing to go upon, and that is the report of the Government Inspector, and I am grateful to Shri Alagesan who had the courtesy to send me a copy, because it was not available anywhere else. Imagine that on such a serious thing as this, where a report of this type should be in the hands of every Member who is interested, we find that copies are not available; a few copies have only now been placed in the Library. That is not the way.

Shri Sinhasan Singh (Gorakhpur Distt—South): That is another accident.

Dr. Jaisoorya: I am not very happy over the ambiguity of this report.

My hon. friend, Shri Anthony, the counsel for defence, is relying 100 per cent. on this. But I am given to understand by Shri T. B. Vittal Rao, an hon. Member who never makes a statement without facts, that this inspector is one of the juniormost in this category. Is that correct?

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Quite correct.

Dr. Jaisoorya: After I read this, I was rather surprised, because, again to my misfortune, I happen to know the problems of the Secunderabad Division of the Central Railway better than the hon. gentleman who has made this Report, better also than some gentleman on the Central Railway and, certainly, better than the gentlemen in this Ministry or the Railway Board. I am coming to that, because I am going to hit out.

Let us look at this. On 27th September 1954, the 319 Down Express left Secunderabad. In this Report, it is not even mentioned as to when did this 319 Down leave Secunderabad station. Imagine an inspector not taking it down, because it has much to do with the assessment of speed. I took the trouble to find out when this 319 Down left on 27th September 1954. It was held up 35 minutes. According to the report of Armstrong, who was a driver, one of the seniormost drivers, a very experienced driver, a man who knew former rules very well—I am coming to that now—he was crossing the bridge at 40 miles an hour. Surana says that the average estimated speed was 53 miles an hour. If you look at the estimated time when it crossed the bridge, it was 22:50 hours. In other words, the train was speeding. And what was the reason for that? To our misfortune, on that day, Loco Inspector Green was testing time punctuality and running time.

Now, this has a very important bearing of which these hon. gentlemen knew nothing, which Shri Anthony, the counsel for defence, also knew nothing about. It is this. There is such a thing known as Llyod Jones' Rule. I would like to ask the hon. Member or

the members of the Railway Board whether they know anything about the Lloyd Jones' Rule, a standing rule, and why was it made? Lloyd Jones' Rule laid down that when there is heavy rain for more than 24 hours, it is the duty of the engine driver to enquire from the nearest station where bridges are in danger, as to the state of the bridges. Secondly, he has to stop when there is persistent rain and personally inspected the bridge, what the level of the water is and so on. Thirdly, he has to go over that bridge at not more than 5 miles an hour. This is known as the Lloyd Jones' Standing Rule and this is the rule that has prevented major accidents upto now on our line, on the ex-Nizam State Railway line. Although, as Shri Feroze Gandhi has clearly pointed out, that bridge has been damaged several times and our line has been washed away, also several times, we never had such terrible and catastrophic disasters which are a disgrace to our country as these. These two major accidents have taken place there, on the ex-Nizam's lines.

Now here was a senior engine driver who knew the Lloyd Jones' Rule and the fact that it was gradient downward, one in 200. I know that area better than the gentlemen sitting here. I know the track inch by inch. That was a vulnerable bridge. My hon. friend, the counsel for defence, does not know that. The Ministry also does not know that. Before 1946, there was a liaison between the Railway and the district officers of the Governments of the States through which these lines went. The liaison rules laid down that in the event of heavy rains, where there were tanks, the village headmen had to report to the Tahsildar that the tanks were filling and water was rising to the surface and overflowing. Again, the Tahsildar informs the police officials. The police officials used to send word to the nearest railway station to the effect, "Take care. These tanks are filling and overflowing. There is danger of bursting".

512 L.S.D.—4.

Now, I want to ask the hon. Minister and the Railway Board whether that liaison is still there. I say it is not there. Why? At least when the previous government was there, they had overall control in such matters, but our present States are each of them independent. Even our wonderful Health Minister cannot get facts. Every time I ask a question, she replies: "What am I to do? The States do not give me facts".

Now, this is the main cause, not what my hon. friend, Shri Antony, the counsel for defence, has stated. If we want to prevent such accidents in future, we will have to re-introduce the system of liaison. The Tahsildar must be made responsible for passing on the information. The railway authorities must be informed in time about these things.

About bursting of tanks, we who come from Telangana know far better than the gentlemen sitting in Delhi, that there is always danger of tanks bursting. In spite of the wise and learned statements made in the Report—I can manufacture any number of statements like this—the fact remains that in 1939, three tanks burst and damaged the bridge.

If you look into the evidence, I do not know what to say about this junior officer. I feel ashamed to read that Report; there is conflicting evidence. I do not want to repeat it. Even at 21.00 hours, the last driver who passed over the bridge gave evidence which was hardly worth anything. He could see the buttresses. And then what happened? The tanks burst.

Remember that when rivers rise higher up, flood is imminent. They wire down. To Bezwada from above, they say: "Take care. The river is rising". Now here in the evidence, one man says: "I hardly saw a trickle". Then one Ramadu—some fellow—says that it was two feet under the bridge. My calculation shows that the bridge is 13' 6" above the river bed. In the evidence, Armstrong makes no reference as to what the level was.

[Dr. Jaisoorya]

This is surprising, the way questions are put and answered.

There is one Capt. D'Souza. Of all the survivors, only Capt. D'Souza gave evidence. There was Mr. M. R. Krishna, Member of Parliament, in the same train. Why was he not called? Why was not evidence taken from him?

Again, I cannot understand the doings of this junior officer, on whom my hon. friend places much reliance and importance. He never even enquired as to what were the total number of tickets sold. He should have certified the total number of tickets sold. I will explain why it is important. In the recent Mehboobnagar accident, I had one advantage which I did not have last time. I got all the factual figures of the number of tickets sold from Secunderabad up to Jadcherla. By that time, the authorities woke up and kept the number of tickets sold at Jadcherla a closely guarded secret. But, when the official figures of the deaths at Mehboobnagar came in the next debate, if and when it takes place, and if I happen to be in this House, I shall challenge those figures based on the number of tickets sold from the various booking offices and show that they are far in excess of the official figures.

16 hrs.

**An hon. Member:** They always are.

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** I am giving facts as they stand. I am not here to indict anybody but I am certainly here to indict this youngster who has written this report as not helping in assessing exactly how we are going to prevent further accidents. This report came out on the 17th December, 1954 and all this time the Railway Board has had time to study it. But what did they do? May I tell you one thing? I am saying it with a broken heart, because I know facts which my hon. friend the Defence Council cannot controvert, that inspection tours have taken place—several tours.

**Mr. Speaker:** The remarks lose their value; here and there humour is permitted.

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** I have never heard such a speech as my hon. friend's. It is a *volte face*. I am coming to that.

Here we are dealing with facts. Inspections have taken place. The history of that bridge has disappeared. The Chief Engineer Mr. Thadani gives evidence and says that he did not know anything about it. Yet he quotes also from the Works and Ways Manual. Funny! If he had done that he should also have known that it was his bounden duty to have found out everything about it. In 1939 Mr. Aibara had drawn attention to this and nothing was done. Because repairs took place in 1940, they relied upon it as eternal. Their duty, as laid down, is that every year an inspection has to take place. Accidents can happen; there can always be the human factor and error of judgement. But when that accident took place they should have waked up to the fact that they should examine every bridge on the ex-N.S. Railway. Then, the 2nd and 3rd disaster could not have happened. I lay the blame at the door of the Ministry and the Railway Board that they have never thought in terms of this because they are sitting on Mount Parnassus thinking themselves to be wonderful, knowing everything, omniscient. I lay the blame on them and I hold them morally and legally responsible for that. If they are not capable let them go out; I will put better men in their place. They have the impertinence to suggest that the Railway Board is an autonomous body and that even the Minister cannot interfere with it. I would throw them out if I were the Minister and I would say, 'get out, I will put new men there'.

**An Hon. Member:** Unfortunately, you are not.

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** My friend, Shri Anthony said, 'Quite right'.

**Mr. Speaker:** There are other hon. Members who are anxious to speak.

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** Sir, this is my last point. The man should have gone and seen whether the river is rising. Some

Mallayya Gadu or Ramudu says that he saw the river rising. He reported it and he was made to retract it. So, nobody saw the river rising. I am sorry. Do you know the terrific impact of that? It is a small, miserable little bridge and the hon. Minister says, 'I am surprised how such a terrific thing can happen on such a small bridge'. If anybody knows anything of the geography and topography, he will realise that these very things are dangerous when the tanks burst and the rubble comes down like a battering ram. Here is a big argument—it was not over-flowing. The fact is that the piers had been washed away and the bridge was left hanging. Here we have got some engineers talking tomfoolery. The fact is that 3 times within 2 years identical accidents took place. If you can console yourself that this is an act of God, but under very suspicious circumstances, I have nothing to say.

The South German railways were once notorious for accidents and there was a cartoon that came out. A man wanted to commit suicide and he was lying on the railway track and Death said to him, 'if you want to make sure of dying, get into the train'.

It is a very sad thing. I do not want to indict anybody. But, instead of the hon. Minister getting up and taking up cudgels to defend the indefensible, he should himself practice criticism. They are not going to improve anything; we are there to help him. He is not even trying to be helpful. I have no use for smug complacency and no use for swelled heads who think that they know everything in the world. I am prepared to help. I know something of the railways. You can have it free of cost. But, if another similar accident, should occur then, I shall ask for death sentence, even on the Minister.

**Shri Heda** (Nizamabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Dr. Jaisoorya has already dealt with some aspects of the topography of this area. I think I should deal with it further so that one im-

portant point may be clear to the House.

In Telengana, as you know, there are small tanks interspersed everywhere. Practically, every village has got some tank or other. This river Yaswantpuram seems to be a small river 9 miles away from that bridge. But, in between these 9 miles, this has to fill two tanks, Mysamma Cheruvu and Yerragunta tanks. The capacity of the first tank is 8 million cft. and the capacity of the second tank is 5 million cft. In the report it is stated that there is a small stream which originates from another tank and joins this stream above the bridge. In fact, the report is not very clear. The stream is not a small one. That stream falls into the Yena Cheruvu tank whose capacity is 30 million cft. Again, this very same stream has got two tanks above whose waters also join and fall into this tank. There is another tank yet by the name of Chennagunta, whose capacity is 1½ million cft. All these tanks were filled. The rains there start by the middle of June and continue up to the end of July. The tanks are generally full. This was the month of September and that year the rains were very heavy. So, it is not only the actual rain water that comes to the bridge. We have also to take into account that it is just possible that these tanks may breach and in that case the whole water might come down. This is what happened here. The bank of the Yena Cheruvu breached and the whole waters of the tank, 30 million cft. were drained only in 8 hours. One can imagine how much water would have been arriving at the bridge.

There is another thing, and this is a very strange thing. Generally, bridges are constructed when the course of the river is straight. Bridges are not constructed where there is a turn in the river. But, this particular bridge was constructed—I do not know why—where the river had taken a turn at 60 degrees.

[Shri Heda]

The new bridge that has now been constructed, after this accident, has been constructed at a different place. So, when a river does not flow straight, naturally all the waters which come in the tank, not only the rain water, will be dashing against the piers of the bridge, and that is why it is no wonder that those two piers, which had become vulnerable, were demolished.

Another fact in this regard is this, that is, the very fact that water had gone very much low the same day early morning and by the next day about ten o'clock in the morning practically water not more than knee-deep was visible again shows that it was not rain water but it was the water from these tanks. Therefore, the Railways, when they maintain the history of these bridges and the rivers, have to think of the catchment area and of all the tanks have developed or go on developing in that catchment area. As is clear from this report, they had not bothered to keep the history of those tanks—whether the tanks were full or empty or whether a new tank had been constructed anywhere. They had no proper idea about the flow of the water, and, therefore, this disaster had taken place. Had they kept the history in that way, it would have been more than possible that they would have given the necessary caution so far as this bridge was concerned, and had the train not taken that much speed, the accident might have been averted.

Another point is this. The report is not satisfactory so far as it deals with the aspect of relief measures. Those who visited the place next day, those who were in the train and were safe—one of them, a prominent colleague of ours, Shri M. R. Krishna, was there—told us that the relief train did not come so early as has been mentioned in this report. The fact is that the evidence that has been gathered is not impartial, is more from official than non-official sources. They did not bother even to gather evidence from the

non-official sources, the people, the public who had come over there and had known so many things. So far as that matter is concerned, the report looks very partial. No doubt the report puts a blame on the relief measures taken from the other side, the Raghunathpalli side. Raghunathpalli, in fact, could not do anything, and from Kazipet another relief train came up. The pertinent point here is that when the train left Jangaon and did not reach Raghunathpalli in ten or fifteen minutes, the Raghunathpalli Station Master should have been alert. Why did he wait thinking that somebody should come to him and report to him and that then only he should do something? Even after that he probably did not think of doing anything. He did know that the train had left Jangaon. In the same way he did know that after the train had left, for 15 minutes or half an hour the train did not reach Raghunathpalli and that something, therefore, was wrong. But he waited till the lineman rushed to him and reported that an accident had taken place and that the train was not properly visible. Even after that, the proper remedy was not taken, which was very very easy. Raghunathpalli is a big village, and again, luckily, there is a very good road connecting Secunderabad and Hanamkonda, which is parallel to the railway line. It is a very live road with buses, trucks and so many things, and even after the accident, as well as before the accident, the road bridge there was intact and he could have arranged some remedy, or he himself could have gone to the place of accident, but he did not bother to do anything, till a relief train came from Kazipet.

The same story was repeated in Mehbhoobnagar accident also. These officials do not care to find out what is wrong with the train, why it has not arrived in time and even after they knew about it, they did not take the relief measures as promptly as they should have.

This report is silent over another fact. The State Government and the State officials were not informed. In fact, so far as this accident is concerned, it took place at about 11 o'clock in the night, and the State officials did not know it till the early hours of the next morning. In fact, they came to know about it not through the Railway sources but through other sources, the persons who had come back, the persons who had escaped and come back. The callous attitude of the railway officials in providing the relief, not bothering over the progress the trains are making and not trying to get the co-operation, help and assistance of the State officials or the local people is also a point in this connection to be considered.

One word more and I have done. It is a good thing that some report has come, because it is just possible that if even this report, however meagre and unsatisfactory it is, had not been there, this discussion or debate might not have taken place. There is a very strong case for a judicial or non-official report on such accidents. Without that, not only the people do not get satisfied but there is always a lurking suspicion, and every hon. Member in this House has given expression to his suspicion or apprehension that the railway officials are trying to shield or cover their own superior officers or higher officials, and they are trying to shuffle their responsibilities.

Therefore, there should not only be a judicial enquiry, but some representatives from the people should also be associated in such a report, so that the people get a thorough satisfaction that their fate or their lives are safe and whatever happens to them has been gone through.

**Mr. Speaker:** How long does the hon. Minister propose to take?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan):** Half an hour.

**Mr. Speaker:** I now call on Shri T. N. Singh, and after him I will call

Shri Vittal Rao. I will then call the Minister, and give ten minutes for reply.

**Shri T. N. Singh (Banaras Dist.—East):** I very much welcome such debates because by habit, whatever I have been able to do in this Parliament has been in the nature of looking at things after long intervals. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee I have had occasions to look into the lapses or deeds or misdeeds of every Department. I welcome it for this reason that there is no room for any passions or emotions after the event, and one can bring to bear logic to facts. That is why I was rather unhappy when my friend on the opposition got excited. I thought such a discussion was the appropriate thing when one could look at things logically and soberly and without any passion or heat. Therefore, I would very much like this accident, this report and whatever facts we know to be discussed very dispassionately. Wherever there are things wrong, we should try to remedy them. Wherever there are no things wrong, we should also not get into a panic. That is a very important aspect of any such enquiry.

After reading the report, I got all the facts brought forward by Dr. Jaisooriya and my friend here, who is a local Member from that area, and then I felt that there were certain features which must be brought to the notice of the House. For instance, the report gives an indication that the piers were to blame. Two piers gave way and on this, I believe, Shri Feroze Gandhi based his entire speech. But the fact is that the tanks gave way.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** That is not so.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** That was what Shri Feroze said.

I find from the report that instead of 8,000 cusecs, the normal flow at the maximum calculated, there was a flow of 20,000 cusecs.

**Shri Heda:** The piers should have been constructed to stand that water.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** I am coming to that. These are the facts. I am not coming to any conclusion. I do not find anything about that in the report. These things should be properly assessed. What are the facts? How far had this flow contributed to this accident? Was it merely due to two piers giving way? Or, was it also due to the additional factor, as Dr. Jaisoorya said, that there were some boulders and other things which struck at them and caused them to break?

This has to be examined very dispassionately and logically. I personally think that in many cases our statistics are very defective. For instance, take the question of the catchment area. I think all our statistics are outdated, old and wrong. As a person having a first hand knowledge about the Hirakud project, I may say this. They calculated that water in the catchment area after some rainfall will be so much and that the water discharged will be so many cusecs at the highest level but later on somebody said that we must go ten feet more, above the dam that we have planned. Similarly, all these things have to be studied. Whatever may be correct according to a particular knowledge and information, may not be correct according to the latest information. I would urge that there should be a proper arrangement for getting all the statistics and then we should take them into consideration. It is no use getting excited and trying to blame somebody and saying that so and so should be hanged. That is not the point.

I think it will be doing a disservice to a proper consideration of this very vital problem on which depends the lives of our people. Therefore, I deprecate any tendency to get excited about it. I would suggest a proper study of the catchment areas, the discharge possibilities, the maximum stress and strain that these piers can stand, etc. All these things should be re-calculated.

In the report there are all kinds of formulae. I do not claim to be a tech-

nical man and I have not been able to understand one point. I wish that all these would be considered in a scientific manner. They say that two piers gave way. The finding is that in 1940, the third pier was constructed. At that time, care might have been taken to repair the other piers also. I think there is a great deal of weight in that. After hearing what Dr. Jaisoorya has said, that one of the youngest officers was deputed to do this, I would like it to be examined in all its perspective. If there is a big rush of water, what is the manner in which it would affect? They say that the foundation should be deeper still. Speaking as a layman, I feel that the scour should begin from the floor area, mostly. But, I may tell you again that I am speaking as a layman. I would like a proper study to be made. At various places, scouring can take place for various reasons. The same cause may not be responsible for scouring at all places. It all depends upon the bend of the river, the velocity and the other factors including the angle in which the pier is constructed.

I think that all these factors must be considered. I would strongly urge that in all such cases a new study should be made. It is regrettable that we have to take over a railway which I feel was not of the normal standard; it was sub-standard. Let us admit that fact.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** He is making accusations without having seen that railway.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** I have seen things which you are probably unaware. I say that all these should be studied. Let us not get into a panic. Here we are trying to consider the question in a calm and dispassionate manner. What will happen otherwise? Nobody will take any responsibility. I also deprecate the controversy that has arisen now—the talk about Class III, Class II and Class I. What are you going to do with the railways if you begin to talk like that? That is a very dangerous. I warn the House

that such a controversy should not be raised. It is a problem of human lives, efficient running of one of our biggest undertakings. Let us consider this question in the proper perspective and understand it at the proper level and not indulge in blaming this or that person. It is easy to blame some person. What is more necessary and more difficult is to understand the causes and remedy them, without leaving any rancour or animosity or passion. Let us consider it in that spirit. I know that the Ministry is headed by Shri Shastri even now and I know that he is capable—he has been capable—of taking a very dispassionate view of things. He has never shirked his responsibility or did not take the blame wherever it is due. Whosoever replies to this debate, I would like him to approach this problem in that spirit. Wherever it is due, the blame must be put, but without rancour or passion. I am not an expert and I do not totally accept what is contained in the report after what Dr. Jaisooriya has said. I would not like persons like us who sometimes get into passions to examine this. I advocate that in every committee there should be a Member of Parliament but we should also be capable of cold blooded reasoning in such matters like this also.

**Shri Dhulekar** (Jhansi Distt.—South): You exonerate all the officers?

**Shri T. N. Singh:** I am saying that what is more essential is a dispassionate consideration of the causes of this accident. Then, fix the blame on the persons responsible and then punish them, taking steps simultaneously to remove the defects. How many times do my friends want me to repeat—punish, punish, punish. I have said that and it is enough. I am not prepared to get into any heat or passion on this question and in that spirit I urge this House to consider this very important question.

**Shri U. M. Trivedi** (Chittoor): Sir, will you permit me to put one question? Shri Heda has said that there is a curve of 60 degrees at that particu-

lar point. Was it ever mathematically considered by the railway engineers that, if the velocity of unobstructed flow was 9.6 feet per second and the velocity through the bridge with obstruction was 20.4 feet per second according to Molesworth formula, what will be the velocity and pressure upon the piers when the curve was 60 degrees at that particular point? Was it not an engineering mistake to have constructed that bridge at that place?

**Shri Heda:** The rivers also might have changed their course.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I congratulate Shri Feroze Gandhi for having raised this discussion. This is the first of the three major train disasters that occurred in our country. It is very essential that this Report should be discussed in this House so that we can find out whether the enquiry conducted by the Government Inspector of Railways has been thorough and complete. It will also help us to find out what lessons we have to draw so that these things can be avoided in future.

The first thing to which I want to draw the attention of the House is that the enquiry has been conducted by the junior-most officer, who is a leave reserve officer in the office of the Chief Government Inspector of Railways and who is to act when anybody goes on leave. This is an accident in which 136 persons perished. It is a serious accident the like of which never occurred for several years. To conduct an enquiry into that accident this junior officer was sent. The Minister for Communications owes an explanation to this House for this. I am sorry that in spite of the fact that I raised this point that the Minister for Communications may be present, because this Report entirely concerns the Ministry of Communications, he is not here.

Nonetheless, the Report does bring out some salient factors. In the composition of this train on that fateful day two extra bogies were attached.

[Shri T. B. Vittal Rao]

The speed of the train was increased only a few days or a few months before the date of this accident. The composition of this train used to be five bogies and it was made to seven on that day. Whether the track was safe for carrying such an additional load at such a speed has not been made clear to us. During that day there was incessant rain and many breaches had occurred. Whether it was safe to run that train with such an additional load has not been made clear in this Report.

A suggestion was made by two Assistant Engineers, one of whom was promoted to the post of General Manager of that Railway, that more waterway should be provided for by widening and raising the height of the bridge. One of the Assistant Engineers who made that recommendation was promoted to the very high post of General Manager before he fled away to Pakistan. But that suggestion was not agreed to by the Chief Engineer. I admit the Chief Engineer is a superior officer and he has every right to scrutinise the plans submitted to him by Assistant Engineers and decide whether he should accept or reject them. But there is a tendency on the part of Chief Engineers to sit in their offices and examine proposals without visiting the sites. Here, two Assistant Engineers recommended that the bridge should be widened and its height increased.

The Chief Engineer rejected it. I would like to know whether the Chief Engineer went to the spot and examined the proposal. No. He has done it sitting in his office. This fact should be borne in mind. The Chief Engineers do not go on the lines and at least test-check the bridges. Therefore, this method of scrutinising the plans should be given up if accidents are to be avoided in future. Whenever any suggestion is made by an Assistant Engineer or a District Engineer, the Chief Engineer should go to the site and examine the suggestion before arriving at his decision.

Then there is the question of foundations. There are three piers in this case and the foundations of the piers are different. It is common knowledge that the strength of the structure is more when the foundations are uniform. This point was very ably argued by my friend Shri Feroze Gandhi. The reasons for the variance in foundations have not been given in this Report as well.

Sir, it is common practice, when constructing bridges across rivers, rivulets or streams, to make some allowance for the discharge of impounded water in the tanks. That allowance is made as a matter of safety. That, unfortunately, seems to have been not taken into consideration in this particular case. That point also has not been clearly brought forth in this Report.

Further, nothing is mentioned about the material used in the construction of this bridge. I understand—I am not quite sure because I am not a technical man—that the material used for this bridge was lime. This is most unsuitable for construction of bridges. I do not know what steps are being taken by the Railway Board in this regard, regarding the use of materials for construction of bridges.

The Bridge Manual or the Ways and Works Manual should be thoroughly revised. I humbly request the Railway Minister to appoint a small committee of experts to go into this and revise this, because engineering and various other things have developed to a great extent and it is no use depending on these outmoded things.

These three accidents have clearly brought out one more fact. The patrol man should be a skilled man and not an unskilled man as we have got. In an accident like this we lose about Rs. 3 lakhs by way of damage to rolling-stock and about Rs. 6 lakhs by way of compensation; that is about Rs. 10 lakhs. The patrol man has to do an important duty. Let him

be a skilled worker and not a semi-skilled or unskilled worker as he is today.

I do not know who is the member in charge of civil engineering. Previously the Chairman of the Railway Board was in charge of the engineering for the Railways. I do not know whether the present member for engineering is also the engineer for civil engineering. For all I know I am told that he is a mechanical engineer from the Chittaranjan. I would ask him, how many times during the course of these years since the re-organisation of the Railway Board from 1st October, 1954, has he, the member in charge of engineering, inspected any bridge, at least for a test-check so that some kind of confidence may be infused, some kind of a sense of duty may be infused in the minds of the various junior officers? This, I feel, is a grave dereliction of duty on the part of the Railway Board.

**Shri Alagesan:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to reply to this debate with a certain amount of hesitation and trepidation. This is not like any other ordinary debate when Members put forward their points of view.

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** We do not hear anything.

**Shri Matthen (Thiruvellah):** We do not hear the Minister. He may come near.

**Shri Alagesan:** I shall raise my voice from here.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Members want to catch even the first letter of the first word.

**Shri Alagesan:** I should like to say that there is something wrong with the mike arrangement here, because whenever I rise to speak, the hon. Members complain that my voice is not heard. I think that matter also will be attended to.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister starts with a low pitch and as he goes on he raises his voice. I have no objection to provide him with a

special mike whenever he rises in his seat.

**Shri Alagesan:** Thank you.

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** He is neither micro-  
phonic nor photogenic.

**Shri Alagesan:** This is not just an ordinary occasion when points of view are put forward by the hon. Members and replies given from the Government side. As you know, we labour under a triple tragedy though we are discussing a report about an accident which took place more than two years ago. Recently, we have had the misfortune of two other serious accidents on the Indian railways, and it is no surprise that all of us are suffering under the impact of that sorrow and tragedy.

But I would very respectfully submit that that should be no reason why, as some of the hon. Members did, we should allow our minds to be unhinged from reason, fair-mindedness and cool thinking and judgment. Though we are all steeped in sorrow, that should be no reason why we should not bestow some cool consideration on this subject, as my friend Shri T. N. Singh really appealed for. I am sorry to say that the hon. Member, Shri Nambiar—he is not here now—allowed himself a complete outburst. He called for hanging the persons responsible. These are not ordinarily the words that are uttered in this Parliament. Perhaps, in a different set-up, it may be suitable, and it may sound reasonable, but in the present set-up, it sounds absolutely improper and uncalled for.

**An Hon. Member:** Instead of hanging them, promote them.

**Shri Alagesan:** Perhaps Shri Nambiar and Members of his party are in a plight which I know. They are so perplexed in thought and paralysed in action. Perhaps they want to depend on for their political survival solely on three things,—famine, flood and perhaps accidents.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande (Guna):** He is not here to defend his case.

**Shri Alagesan:** I would like to appeal to Members of the party to which Shri Nambiar belongs, not to make any capital out of these very sorrowful events.

Let us take the report which is under consideration, though some of my hon. friends have travelled away from it. I should like to come back to this report and consider what has been stated in it. Regarding the fixing of responsibility, the Government Inspector of Railways said as follows:

"For the following reasons, I do not hold anyone primarily responsible for the accident:

(a) the waterway at the bridge was designed on the old practice obtaining on HEH the Nizam's State Railway.

(b) The rainfall in the catchment area and the flood in the river were abnormally heavy and sudden."

Further, he says:

"I am of the opinion that in 1940, the Railway Administration should have rebuilt the abutment and piers Nos. 1 and 2 on deeper foundations when such a course was actually adopted in the reconstruction of pier No. 3".

There is another recommendation to which I shall advert sometime later.

Now, these are the two things that the Government Inspector of Railways, who has conducted an enquiry into this accident, has said. The hon. Member, Shri Feroze Gandhi, said that the bridge was vulnerable. One other hon. Member also said the same thing.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** I did not say so. I only read the evidence of the people who appeared before the enquiry.

**Shri Alagesan:** I do not like to be interrupted.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member will note down the points and refer to them in his reply.

**Shri Alagesan:** I would like to preface my remarks, as Shri Frank Anthony pointed out, by saying that this is largely a technical subject. In fact, I may not be able to do full justice to the subject if I go into the details, but I only wish to say such things as can be understood by lay people like ourselves.

As far as the vulnerability goes, let us go into what the report itself says. The Permanent Way Inspector "considered the bridge as a vulnerable point requiring special watch and to this end he had instructed his gang mate to specially watch this bridge when the gang went out on patrol duties during heavy rains."

Then, the Assistant Engineer, Shri M. Khaja Mohiuddin Khan is referred to as follows:

"Although aware of the damage in 1939, he did not consider the bridge a vulnerable point requiring special attention during heavy rains as protective works were carried out in 1940 and subsequently there was no trouble".

Again, when asked as to what steps he took to ensure that the bridge was kept under a watch, he stated that the Divisional Engineer did not mean a constant watch over the bridge but merely desired that the Permanent Way Gang who are required to go out patrolling during heavy rains should look at the condition of this bridge also. This was again corroborated by the Divisional Engineer. Let us see what the Divisional Engineer says.

"He was not aware of any factors which might have given rise to the belief that the bridge was or was likely to be rendered unsafe".

Then he corroborates what the Assistant Engineer said about what

he meant, namely, that a constant watch over the bridge was not necessary.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** One is in writing. The other is verbal.

**Shri Alagesan:** So, this is what the Permanent Way Inspector thought. He thought it was vulnerable. But, the report says that the opinion of the Assistant Engineer and the Divisional Engineer was that the bridge was not something that will be rendered unsafe.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** Please read further down the report.

**Shri Alagesan:** I think the whole report has been read by the hon. Members.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** We have read the report.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member will reply at the end. There is no point in interrupting now.

**Shri Alagesan:** The other day, Shri Feroze Gandhi put a question to me whether it was a fact that "Divisional Engineer" was mentioned. It was actually the "Assistant Engineer". It is true that he recommended the construction of two additional spans etc. I at that time said I could not lay my hands on it. I also said that if the Divisional Engineer had recommended it, the practice is that it should be approved by the Chief Engineer and the Chief Engineer might not have agreed with that view. That is what I said, because I could not lay my hands on that particular portion of the report. The hon. Member, who has read the report did not perhaps care to remember it at that time. I shall draw his attention to that portion. Shri Aibara, who was the Assistant Engineer in the year 1939, recommended two additional waterways and some other works. Shri Aibara added that the Chief Engineer "did not consider the additional waterways necessary, but thought that the bridge was subjected to scouring action as a result of the angular breach of the stream and that the provision of drop walls and

flooring would ensure adequate safety." The question of angular breach was raised by Mr. Heda and Mr. Trivedi also wanted some light to be thrown on it. This was what the Chief Engineer considered the malady to be at that time and he provided for the drop walls, flooring etc. It is true that the judgment of the junior officer, the Assistant Engineer, turned out to be correct after 14 years of course and the risk that the Chief Engineer decided to take was not justified. When we talk of the Assistant Engineer, the Divisional Engineer or the Chief Engineer, it should be remembered that these are all officers of the ex-Nizam State Railway; we are not talking of the present Engineers.

The Government Inspector of Railways has stated:

"It would thus appear that in making an appraisal of the maximum flood discharge in 1940—please note the year—the Chief Engineer followed the old practice in vogue on H.E.H. the Nizam's State Railway. This, unfortunately, gave results which fell considerably short of the peak flood discharge of 27th September, 1954."

Mind you, the bridge stood, as I said the other day, for 14 years. It was rebuilt in 1940 putting only one pier on deeper foundations and allowing the other piers to remain as they were, but protecting them with some protection work. The Government Inspector continues to say:

"Had a proper appreciation of the maximum flood discharge been made in 1940, the entire bridge might have been rebuilt and additional waterway provided."

May be I cannot question this statement of his. I do not even want to say that one can be wise after the event. The Chief Engineer then took a certain amount of risk which, as I said, was not found justified. But let us go into the merits of the actual

[Shri Alagesan]

grounds which made the Chief Engineer take that risk. Here I am going to say something technical which I should hesitate to put forward myself, but I hope I am right. This is what my advisers have told me and I have also read certain literature on the subject. What was the old practice obtaining on the ex-Nizam State Railway, on which the Chief Engineer relied and rejected the suggestion of the Assistant Engineer to have additional waterways? The formula adopted for the calculation of the flood discharge was the Dicken's formula. There are various formula adopted by engineers for the determination of the flood discharge. I am told in a publication issued under the authority of the Central Water and Power Commission as many as 34 formula are there obtaining in our country. In the south, the Ryve's formula was used for the purpose of this calculation. In Bombay they adopt what is called the Inglis formula. In the north-west, they use the Kanwarsain formula; in the major part of the north and east, they use the Dicken's formula. It was this Dicken's formula that was relied upon by the Chief Engineer for his calculation. I do not want to go into details. This is based on several indeterminate factors. It has to take into account the nature of the catchment area, the nature of the rainfall etc. Various other things have been stated; I do not want to go into them. These formula are not fixed, scientific or determinate formula. They are all empirical.

**An Hon. Member:** What does "empirical" mean?

**Shri Alagesan:** Empirical formula is a formula which is not fixed. I am willing to be enlightened on the meaning of the word "empirical". It means, it is not a cut and dry formula. One has to go largely by experience by the data that one has collected in a particular region. Taking the Inglis formula which provides for the maximum amount of safety, even then something may happen and the

bridge may be washed away. You can play for not cent per cent but thousand per cent safety, but even then something may happen and all your calculations may go awry. That is what is meant by empirical formula. But still, the engineers have their own knowledge of the terrain, of the particular area concerned and the behaviour of the rivers in that particular area and by experience make these calculations. Here the calculation was made in that way. I understand that in the United States of America, they do not depend on any of these formula. They take each and every area. The catchment area being the same, the formula may vary for different rivers taking off from the same catchment area. They have worked out by long study, experience and collection of data what should be the formula for a particular river at various places. That is a very thorough work, of course. I wish we have the men and money to carry out such work. But, I should like to remind the House that there are thousands and thousands of bridges on the Indian Railways. I am told there are 35,000 bridges.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** Over 100,000.

**Shri Alagesan:** I take the information from the hon. Member.

Of course, he knows much more on railways than I do.

**Shri Raghunath Singh (Banaras Disst.—Central):** Surely.

**Shri Alagesan:** No such confirmation is needed. I myself admit; it is not a statement made with mental reservations.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** You are very modest.

**Shri Alagesan:** The hon. Member knows hundred times more than I do about railways. There is no need for Mr. Raghunath Singh to confirm it and reaffirm it. I am neither modest nor immodest.

This formula was worked out and they provided for a discharge of 8,680 cusecs, i.e. cubic feet per second. They provided for that.

After this bridge was washed away, the actual discharge was measured by the Railway Engineers. The actual quantum of water that passed through the bridge came to 18,900 cusecs. It was provided for a discharge of 8680 cusecs, but the actual flood that passed through this bridge came to 18,900 cusecs, that is nearly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times what was provided for.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** The mistake was by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times.

**Shri Alagesan:** Then, it was said that the Government Inspector was a junior man. Many hon. Members are young here. I do not think that Shri T. B. Vittal Rao is an old person; but he is a very wise person. I do not know how an officer being a junior affects the nature of the enquiry.

**An Hon. Member:** Experience counts.

**Shri Alagesan:** This country is divided into four circles. Whenever anything happens in a particular circle, naturally, the Inspector in charge of that circle is made to enquire into the accident. So I was amused when the question of juniority or seniority was trotted out on the floor of the House.

**Shri Cattopadhyaya (Vijayavada):** We are amused to hear this.

**Shri Alagesan:** This Inspector who enquired into the matter, consulted Dr. Joglekar, a very experienced man who is in charge of the hydraulic research section in Karakvasla near Poona. He examined and found that the bridge gave way between 10,000 and 14,000 cusecs. Though it was designed for 8680 cusecs, it would have stood its ground up to 10,000 cusecs. It was found that it gave way between 10,000 and 14,000 cusecs. When it was actually measured and found to be 18,900 cusecs, he suggested another formula, the Inglis formula. That formula, as I said, is not a very fixed or determinate or concrete one. It was evolved sometime

in 1940 or 1930, I do not remember. Then it was revised. It was not in the knowledge of the Engineers when actually the bridge was reconstructed, that is, in 1940. No Engineer knew about this formula. This formula, it is stated, will apply only to the Bombay region, that is, Western India region. Dr. Joglekar gave a formula, modifying the Inglis formula and calculated a discharge of 20,000 cusecs. On the basis of this, the new bridge has been constructed. That I may say. All these fourteen years, the flood was not as ferocious as the one that occurred in 1954. We took the largest amount of water that has passed through it and we have provided a little more than that. God forbid, something may happen 20 years hence and the actual discharge may be 40,000 cusecs in which case, the bridge will be surely washed away. I do not want any accident hereafter in the Indian Railways. In fact, I shall be glad if any hon. Member can give a guarantee to the House and the country that there will be no more accident in the Indian Railways. I do not know the Prime Minister's mind. If such a person can come forward with such an assurance, certainly he will be invited to occupy the place of the Railway Minister. It can be safely taken, as far as the present calculations go.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the hon. Minister mean to say that when a new formula is discovered, the old formula may be thrown into the background immediately and the officers who go about or the Railway Board or the Minister should not, in view of the new formula, find out how many bridges satisfy these conditions?

**Shri Alagesan:** I am coming to that. I am only saying that it is no use swearing by these formulae, because it is in the nature of the formula itself that it is not determinate, and that it is not a fixed quantity. It has to be taken, and measured taking into account all the physical conditions, nature of the flood, etc.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** It means, no formula is necessary.

**Shri Alagesan:** Still it is necessary. It is not free licence.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** Depend upon God.

**Shri Alagesan:** Of course, we do. I hope the hon. Member does.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** I do.

**Shri Alagesan:** The Inspector says about the flood: that it is evident that between 19:13 hours and 22:50 hours, in a very short period of 3½ hours, the discharge of the river built itself up from nothing to about 18,900 cubic feet per second. The flood in the river was not only abnormally heavy, but also sudden. All fairminded people will find no difficulty in agreeing with this proposition that one could not have foreseen that such a flood will build itself up in the small stream that it was. Anyhow, it did not occur all these 14 years. It is unfortunate that it occurred in 1954. That was the position with reference to the provision of the additional waterway. As I said, we may now say that in 1940, this Inglis formula, which was not then known, should have been applied. It was not known then.

**An Hon. Member:** It should have been applied.

**Shri Alagesan:** If anybody says that it should have been applied at that time, there should be something wrong.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** It should have been applied in 1954.

**Shri Alagesan:** .... with the thinking processes of that gentleman.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** Ignorant people cannot be blamed.

**Shri Alagesan:** I should like to say something about what the Government Inspector has mentioned as item No. 3. He says:

"I am of the opinion that the accident might have been averted if the P.W. Gang had gone out on patrolling duty....."

Shri Nambiar was controverting Shri Frank Anthony when he was referring to this. This is a different thing. He says:

"....but I do not consider that it could have been averted by Patrolman Mankadu Ramadu as according to the timings prescribed for him, he was last due to be at the bridge at 21:55 hours when the bridge was safe for traffic."

He felt that this could have been averted if the P.W. Gang had gone out on patrolling duty. That is what the Inspector has stated.

Questions were raised that somebody is against Class IV staff and that small men should not be punished, etc. About patrolmen also, it was said that they did not do any patrolling that night. Now, it is difficult to proceed against these gentlemen because there are the sheets in which they obtained the signatures of the station masters. As against the glaring evidence of the patrol sheets, it was not possible for the Railway administration to proceed against these people. There was no question of wreaking vengeance on the small man. In spite of the fact that the Government Inspector of Railways held that the patrolmen did not do their duty and the accident could have been averted if the P.W. Gang had gone to inspect the bridge, in spite of that, we could not proceed against them.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** The station master should have been taken to task—those who signed the sheets.

**Shri Alagesan:** There is no evidence, of course. It is easy to say: hang this man, hang that man. There is no evidence. The patrol sheets are clear evidence, and it is not easy to controvert it. If you have got any doubt, you can consult Shri Vittal Rao as to whether it is possible to proceed against anybody in those circumstances. So, it is not a matter of trying to shield anybody or trying to wreak vengeance on the small man.

This aspect has been stressed before also, and I should like to mention it. I am not prepared to say that discipline has gone down to nil among the railwaymen. There are many, lakhs and lakhs of railwaymen who want to discharge their duties conscientiously, but I should like to mention here the difference that has taken place. The old element of fear based upon some punishment that will be received has disappeared.

**Shri Velayudhan** (Quilon cum Mavelikkara—Reserved—Sch. Castes): Because new men came there in power.

**Shri Alagesan**: Now, that has to be replaced. It has to be replaced by a spontaneous sense of duty. Maybe it may take some time, but I hope that the million railwaymen who are actually responsible for the running of the railways in this country—it should be admitted that though there are accidents and very bad accidents, thousands and thousands of trains run in this country without any accidents; that major fact is forgotten and I should like to draw the attention of hon. Members to that—will soon get into that high sense of duty and discipline. That is the only substitute that I see. We cannot wield the big stick. Those days are over, never to return. It is not possible any more to wield the big stick. We are a growing democracy and when the discipline that is born out of fear has disappeared, it can only be replaced by a self-born high sense of duty, and I hope that that duty will be perceived soon by the railwaymen, even those who are unable to see it now and be imbibed by them.

Another matter was raised, and that is with reference to inspection by the Members of the Railway Board. We seem to have suddenly turned into very bloodthirsty people. We want the heads of so and so, the hands of so and so and the legs of so and so. I do not know

when we became so violent in our attitude.

**Shri Kamath** (Hoshangabad): They have fallen into the river, the heads, hands and legs.

**Shri Alagesan**: The hon. Member was not here when I began.

**Shri Kamath**: I was here. You are blind apparently. I have been listening carefully from the very beginning.

**Shri Alagesan**: I know the hon. Member specialises in the art of insulting other hon. Members.

**Shri Kamath**: I protest strongly against this. He has insulted the whole house.

**Shri Alagesan**: I do not object. Let him please himself.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi**: The waterway is not sufficient between these two.

**Shri Alagesan**: I did not get the hon. Member.

**Mr. Speaker**: We are 15 minutes past five.

**Shri Kamath**: The Minister is insulting the whole House.

**Mr. Speaker**: So far as this is concerned, if he did not notice him, he need not immediately get up and say the Minister is blind. Let us go on. We have already sat 15 minutes more.

**Shri Alagesan**: I am finishing in a few minutes.

The Board has been sufficiently expanded. We have got additional Members who are in charge of staff matters, civil engineering works, commercial side etc., so that the full Members of the Board are free for more and more inspection, actually going out on the line. It is very necessary, and I am glad hon. Members stressed this very constructive aspect. That has been done, and the Members of the Railway Board will now be more free to go out on inspection, and actually see things for themselves and remove and rectify defects. It is very necessary and

[Shri Alagesan]

this constructive thing, I hope, will be done in all earnestness by the Members of the Railway Board.

We have been talking about the past, about what should have happened in 1940. I should like to say what we have done now after the recent calamity. The new bridge has been designed and built about 850 feet down stream of the old bridge. The site has been changed, and this was done on the advice of and in consultation with Dr. Joglekar. This site was selected in consultation with Dr. Joglekar of the Central Hydraulic Research Station, Poona. The design of the new bridge was also finalised after model experiments were carried out at the Hydraulic Research Station by Dr. Joglekar. The waterway provided under the new bridge is for the estimated discharge of 20,000 cusecs based on the English formula. The Central Railway engineers also traced from floods observations the discharge of the nala on the fateful night of 27th September, 1954 to be 18,900 cusecs. The new bridge consists of eight spans of 40 feet each with foundations 26 ft. to 31 ft. below bed level. Let us hope and pray that this bridge will stand and stand for ever.

Shri Velayudhan: Stand for ever?

Shri A. M. Thomas (Ernakulam): May I ask....

Shri Alagesan: No, I have not finished.

Shri Frank Anthony: Will the Minister deal with this question of speeds with these WP engines on the track?

Shri Alagesan: I am unable to say anything on the spur of the moment. Certainly that will be taken into account.

I am glad to give this information to the House. Since the authorised formulae were evolved by their authors for the assessment of the waterway required to be provided

for bridges, there has been a big advance in the study of hydrology. It has, therefore, been decided to set up a high level committee consisting of the representatives of the railways and other Ministries concerned like the Roads Wing of the Transport Ministry and the Central Water and Power Commission, and any other Members they would like to co-opt on an *ad hoc* basis. This committee will look into all the aspects of the problem, and then define principles to be adopted and the formulae to be used in different areas. The composition of the committee and the terms of reference are under consideration.

I have nothing more to add. I am grateful to all the Members who have made constructive suggestions.

Shri Matthen: May I make one request?

Shri Alagesan: I have not yet finished. One minute.

Shri Frank Anthony has been an unsparing critic of the railway administration. Somebody called him the defence counsel. I think that hon. Member has done injustice to Shri Anthony.

Dr. Jaisoorya: I know best what I am talking about. As if I do not know what I am talking about.

Shri Alagesan: If anybody has been a consistent and continuous critic of the railways, it is Shri Anthony.

Dr. Jaisoorya: A man can change coats. Elections are coming.

Shri Alagesan: I should like to thank Shri Anthony for the very constructive suggestions he has made not only today, but the other day when he made a speech.

Shri Matthen: I am glad he has appointed some more Members on the Railway Board, but will he consider the appointment of some more engineers on the railways so that they may look properly to maintenance. The engineers are overworked, and so I am only requesting.

**Shri Alagesan:** As far as the appointment of engineers goes, we have recruited a very large number of engineers, in view of the very large number of works that have to be undertaken under the Second Five Year Plan.

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** May I put one question? This report was submitted as early as 1954. But accidents have taken place after that. May I enquire whether the Railway Ministry or the Railway Board or the Department concerned had taken any steps in the light of the facts disclosed in this report?

**Mr. Speaker:** Before the other accidents occurred?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** Yes.

**Shri Alagesan:** If I may say so, one of the main recommendations of this report was....

**Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad (Purnea cum Santal Parganas):** Notice.

**Shri Alagesan:** The hon. Member may require notice, not I.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. Let there be no interruptions.

**Shri Alagesan:** One of the recommendations was in regard to the way in which it should be rebuilt. That has been done.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** In that bridge. But what about the other bridges?

**Shri Alagesan:** The House also knows now that we have appointed a committee to go into the question of the condition of the bridges in the Hyderabad area. Besides, the Chief Engineers of the various railways have been asked to collect data.

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** But that is after the third accident.

**Shri Alagesan:** No, it was not after that.

When this committee reports, whatever action to found necessary in  
512 LSD—5

other railways can also be simultaneously taken.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** I think it will be taking advantage if I were to give a harsh reply to the Deputy Minister. My main point was that the two piers of this bridge were not on deep enough foundations, but were resting on sand. That was the main thing, not the waterway or anything else.

**Mr. Speaker:** That was admitted.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** The inspector says that:

"The inadequacy of waterway, however, would not have caused the failure of the bridge if the piers had been founded on rock or hard moorum; instead, the railway embankment may have been breached or the flood water may have overtopped it without causing serious damage."

The point is that the piers gave way. There is no question of the waterway at all. At a later date, an engineer calculated that the waterway was insufficient and that it should have been more. But the main point was that the two piers were not on deep enough foundation. One pier, that is, pier No. 3 was on a foundation of 15.25 feet, and piers Nos. 1 and 2 were on a foundation of 6.5 feet. That was the point, and that has not been answered at all.

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon):** Because that is unanswerable.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** I am not concerned with empirical formulae, nor am I concerned over which formula is up to date and which formula is out of date. That is not my concern. That is the concern of the Railway Board.

This railway was taken over in April 1950, four and a half years before this accident. It was in the possession of the Railway Board.

I made a direct charge against the Railway Board, which has not been answered, namely that it was the responsibility of the Railway Board to have checked the lines and to have

[Shri Feroze Gandhi]

checked the bridges as provided for in the Indian Railway Code. It has the same set of rules and it says that when a line under construction has to be declared an open line, they should go to the Chief Inspector of Railways; they should have asked the Chief Inspector of Railways to check the track and to check the bridges.

Coming to the Chief Engineer, I said that the Chief Engineer had made a statement that he did not know the history of this bridge. Now, what is the responsibility of the Chief Engineer? Here is the Indian Railway Code, from which I had quoted one para earlier. Now, I shall quote the para dealing with his direct responsibility. Under Form No. 1629(e)—Maintenance of bridge—Bridge Register, we find:

“The Register should be reviewed periodically by the Executive Engineer concerned and the Chief Engineer with a view to ensure that the bridges are maintained efficiently and that defects have been removed promptly.”

How could the Chief Engineer have issued this certificate to the Railway Board? That is what I would like to know. It is his responsibility to issue annual certificates to the Railway Board. He did not even know the history of the bridge. When that was the case, how did he issue the certificates? That is the point. Is it enough if the Deputy Chief Engineer comes and says, ‘Yes, I visited this section’? That point also has not been answered. Did he go on a picnic? I ask: Was it a picnic?

**Dr. Jaisoorya:** Yes.

**Shri U. M. Trivedi:** It was not a saloon.

**Shri Velayudhan:** Usually, it is like that.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** He said ‘The pages concerning this bridge escaped

my attention’. And my hon. friend Shri Frank Anthony says that the patrolmen are to blame.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** I said that they were all to blame.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** That is why I did not raise it in the debate. I put a question to the Minister the other day. The written question was:

“In view of the findings that the accident could have been averted if the PWD gang had gone out on patrolling duty, what action has been taken against those officers who were responsible for not sending out these men on duty?”

The reply to that was.

**Shri Alagesan:** Do I have a chance to reply to these points?

**Mr. Speaker:** Under the rules, the hon. Member who tables the motion is entitled to the right of reply. If, however, there are any very serious matters raised, then they can be replied to by the Minister.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** Then, I must also have the chance to reply to those points.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members may kindly read the rules again. It cannot be an endless thing.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** We can sit tomorrow.

**Mr. Speaker:** After Shri Feroze Gandhi’s speech, I shall allow the Minister to reply, and then, we shall disperse.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** After all, the Minister had taken forty to forty-five minutes, and he could have answered all my points. I am only referring to the points which he has not answered.

**Shri Kamath:** He could not answer.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** In answer to my written question, the following was the reply that I got:

"The rules prescribe that the gangmate should take his gang out when there is heavy or prolonged rain. No officer is therefore, responsible for failure to send him out. In this case, the gang-mate actually went out as soon as he learnt of the flooding but he arrived at the bridge after the accident."

So, he did out. Then, my other point remains, namely that you are making the man do eighteen miles of walking every night, for which you are paying Rs. 0-2-8 and Rs. 0-4-0 for the night, for the extra work. If an industrial establishment were to do this, the proprietor would be in jail.

That is what I would like to submit. All these points should be answered. This is not the way of answering a debate,—to say that the formulae are empirical or that the formulae are theoretical. I agree that the formulae are empirical. But each formulae has to be taken as good at the time it is introduced. If in 1940 there was formula, in 1950 there is another. Take that formula.

I would repeat what I said earlier. Take the case of the Jumna bridge. This year, we know what happened to the Jumna bridge, and how the Shahdara bund was flooded. What is it due to? Under the First Five Year Plan and the Second Five Year Plan, we have interfered with the natural flow and the drainage of water. We know that. Half the country has been covered with canals, and river valley projects and things like that, which actually interfere with the drainage. Herein, the railways must be cautious. If the canals are raised to a height of about 15 or 20 feet, they have to be above the surface level of the earth. They interfere with the natural flow of water. The railway tracks are running all over the country. So, some machinery should be set up to co-ordinate the developmental

activities and see that the natural drainage is not interfered with. I have met many old villagers in my constituency and they say that 'Never in the past 30 or 40 or 50 years do we ever remember to have had such a flood as this. But after this canal has been built, our village is always flooded'. It only means that you have interfered with the natural drainage of water.

Now, these are the things that should be taken into consideration. The Minister says that a committee has been appointed. I say, it will do nothing. The Chief Inspector of Railways should have been on that committee. He should have been a member of that committee. But why is he not there? He is not there because all the time there is a conflict between the Railway Board and the Chief Inspector of Railways.

The Railway Board want to take away the powers of the Chief Inspector of Railways. They want to reduce these powers because he is irksome. The job of the Chief Inspector of Railways is not only to go and inquire into accidents. His job is to fix standards for the Indian railways. No matter what it is, even if it is a door handle, it is his job. If it is a bridge, if it is a track, he tests it out. He carries out various tests. Then he certifies that the bridge or track is safe for public traffic.

I say that these rules should have been observed when the Nizam's State Railway was taken over. You may call it oversight. If you say that it is oversight, then I will say nothing; I will withdraw every charge against the Railway Board. But let them say, 'Yes, something did go wrong'. Let them not say, 'We are not responsible'. They are responsible. Who else is responsible? The Railway Board exercise the powers of the Central Government as far as they concern the Indian Railways Act. They have absolute powers. We have handed over the whole thing to them. We have entrusted it to them and they too must do their job.

[Shri Feroze Gandhi]

Shri Heda and Shri T. N. Singh said that the tanks burst and there was more water. This is wrong. Here is the finding of the Inspector:

"I therefore consider that the bursting of the tanks on the 27th September, 1954, did not materially contribute to the collapse of the bridge".

Those two piers were hanging in the air or resting on sand! Even if a third-rate engineer had gone into it, this could have been found out.

The difficulty is that our officers have become so smug and so complacent. They say, "What are we to do? The men under us do not work. Coolies are not working. What can we do?" I say there are rules regarding the duties of patrolmen and gangmen. Everybody should be made to work. If they are not working, fire them. I say, face a strike on the Indian railways. Have it out. If you think that the workers on the Indian railways are indisciplined, if you say that they are not working, I say, let us face it; we will all support the Minister. We will support the Railway Board. Let us have a general strike on the Indian railways, but no more of this.

**Shri Alagesan:** Not a very kind intention.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi:** When we tell you something, take it that we are trying to advise you in the best interests of the country. I say, if you think that there is indiscipline, then face a general strike. Let the workers go on strike. Let things happen like that, but let us not go on like this.

With regard to the bridge itself, there was some mention about whether it was a small bridge or a big bridge. Under the Indian Railway Code, bridges are defined. This particular bridge, No. 393, falls into the category of a major bridge. It is not a minor bridge.

I will make one more request and then sit down. Shri Shah Nawaz Khan, now Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport, was appointed in 1954-55 Chairman of a Committee called the Railway Accidents Inquiry Committee. I demand that the Report of this Committee be placed on the Table of the House. It is very necessary that we must know what are the contents of that Report. Two years have passed since the Committee reported. I would suggest to the Railway Minister that this Report may be placed on the Table of the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the hon. Minister want to say anything?

**Shri Alagesan:** If you want me to say a few words, I will.

Otherwise, I do not want to take the time of the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is all right.

**Shri Velayudhan:** What about the Report of the Committee?

**Mr. Speaker:** We will go to the next item of business.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE  
MEMBERS' BILLS AND  
RESOLUTIONS

SIXTY-FIFTH REPORT

**Shri Raghunath Singh:** (Banaras Dist.—Central): I beg to present the Sixty-fifth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

MESSAGE FROM RAJYA SABHA

**Joint Secretary:** Sir, I have to report the following message received from the Secretary of Rajya Sabha:

"In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 162 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return