

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA, I will continue tomorrow

STATEMENT BY MINISTER—TRAIN ACCIDENT ON BUDGE-BUDGE—SEALDAH SECTION ON THE 6TH JANUARY, 1991

रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री भूत चरण दास) : महादय, मुझे बड़े दुःख के साथ सदन में यह सूचित करना पड़ रहा है कि कल 6 जनवरी 1991 को 10 बजकर 26 मिनट पर एच जी 45 बज-बज सियालदाह ई०एम०यू० लोकल ट्रेन और गुड्स ट्रेन के बीच टक्कर के कारण सियालदाह में एक्सीडेंट हो गया जिससे 9 लोग घायल होकर मर गए जिस में 5 पैसेंजर्स और 3 आफिशियल्स शामिल थे।

सियालदाह के डी आर एम० को इसकी जानकारी मिलने के पश्चात् वे वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों तथा मेडिकल टीम सहित तुरंत वहां पहुंचे। रिलीफ वगैरह की व्यवस्था करने के लिए ईस्टर्न रेलवे के विभागाध्यक्ष भी वहां पहुंचे और तुरंत रिबीक की व्यवस्था की गई।

घायल यात्रियों में से दो लोगों को डी०आर० सिंह रेलवे अस्पताल में रखा गया और तीन लोगों को आर०के० मिशन अस्पताल में रखा गया और एक व्यक्ति को प्राथमिक उपचार के बाद डिस्चार्ज कर दिया गया।

यह घटना बहुत ही दुःखद है। इस घटना की जांच के लिए माननीय रेल मंत्री महोदय श्री मिश्रा जी और रेलवे बोर्ड के चेयरमैन आज एक घंटे बाद वहां से रवाना होंगे और कल वहां पहुंचकर इसकी जांच करेंगे।

एक्सीडेंट में मारे गए व्यक्तियों के परिवारों को एक्सपेंसिया पेमेंट तुरंत दिया जा रहा है। कमिश्नर आफ रेलवे सेफ्टी मुंबई से सांविधिक जांच कराने में लगे हुए हैं।

दुर्घटना में मारे गए लोगों के प्रति मैं अपनी श्रद्धांजलि प्रकट करता हूँ और उनके परिवारों के प्रति संवेदना प्रकट करता हूँ और मैं आप सभी से निवेदन करूंगा कि आप मेरे साथ उन लोगों के प्रति संवेदना प्रकट करें।

SHRI MD SALIM (West Bengal): Mr Vice-Chairman, Sir, the south section of the Sealdah Division of the Eastern Railway is one of the most neglected sections in the Eastern Railway, and there is a long-standing demand for modernization of the signal system in the south section, particularly, in the intersection where this accident occurred last night. The Budge Budge section and the Sonapur section are divided near the place of the accident. I would like to ask the Minister whether the Government is ready to take corrective measures for a permanent solution to minimize chances of recurrence of such accidents.

Secondly, how, in the same line, do the goods train and the EMU train meet together? I would like to know whether an inquiry has already been ordered into that. My point of concern is this: In such accidents, the authorities usually blame the staff on duty, but I would like to emphasize on the point of maintenance. I want to know whether maintenance is being done regularly and what is the role of lack of such maintenance in this particular accident.

I also want to know whether the railway authorities have already taken steps to compensate the families of the deceased persons and those who were injured and are under treatment now. I want to know whether the railway authorities have already taken a decision to compensate these people. Particularly, the time of the accident suggests that most of the victims are daily wage earners. Without going into details, as a Member from the city of Calcutta itself, I can say that most of the victims are those travellers who are daily wage earners like vendors who used to go to the city

[Shri Md. Salim]

from the southern suburbs and go back to their native places by such trains. So I would like to emphasize on the question of compensation so that immediate relief can be given to the families of the deceased and those who are injured. My question is, what is the amount that has been ordered to be paid to the individual families of the deceased and what is the amount to be paid to each of the injured persons.

Thank you.

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया (बिहार) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैंने सुबह यह मांग की थी और मुझे लगता है कि यह मांग करने के बाद ही हमारे केन्द्रीय रेल मंत्री महोदय की नींद खुली है और उसके बाद यह स्टेटमेंट तैयार किया गया है। उसके बाद उन्होंने फैसला लिया कि कलकत्ता विज्ञित करना चाहिए। मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि किस वक्त उन्हें यह खबर मिली और खबर मिलने के बाद उन्होंने क्या निर्देश दिए? क्योंकि यह स्टेटमेंट पढ़कर ऐसा नहीं लगता कि अभी तक कोई निर्देश जारी हुए हैं। अभी चार बजे तक मानवीय रेल मंत्री जी यहाँ सदन में उपस्थित थे। रात को साढ़े दस बजे घटना घटी कलकत्ता में और अभी तक यहाँ रेलवे बोर्ड चेयरमैन और रेल मंत्री बैठे हुए हैं। उन्होंने ब्योरा लेने के लिए कोई प्रोग्राम नहीं बताया यह बड़े आश्चर्य की बात है। सबसे आश्चर्य की बात यह है कि जब कलकत्ता शहर के सब अखबारों में हैबलाइम में यह न्यूज दे दी कि 15 आदमी मरे, 12 आदमी मरे या 13 आदमी मरे और झकड़ो घायल हुए है, अस्पताल में पड़े हुए हैं, उनकी फोटोग्राफ्स छपी हैं जिसमें किसी का हाथ टूटा हुआ है, किसी की टाँग टूटी हुई है, किसी का बदन, किसी का सिर लटका हुआ है, बोगियां काट कर उनके निकाला जा रहा है तब जाकर मंत्री महोदय कह रहे हैं कि सिर्फ 9 आदमी मरे हैं और कुछ घायल हुए हैं। सिर्फ कंडालेंस मैसेज देने से काम नहीं चलेगा। मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय

से मांग करता कि जितने भी लोग मरे हैं उनको सरकार की तरफ से एक लाख रुपये का मुआवजा अविलम्ब मिले इसकी तुरन्त घोषणा होनी चाहिए। दूसरी अभी तक कोई इन्क्वायरी कमीशन गठित बा है या नहीं जो यह जांच करे कि किन कारणों से वहाँ एक्सीडेंट हुआ। वेल्से में आया है कि जो मुझ ट्रेन थी वह उसी ट्रेक पर खड़ी थीत सिगनल का इतजार कर रही थी जिस ट्रेक पर पैसंजर ट्रेन को हरी झंडी दिखा कर पार करा दिया गया जब कि उस इलाके की पूरी की पूरी रेलवे लाइन इलेक्ट्रीफाइड है तो कैसे उनको परमीशन दी गई। इस स्टेटमेंट से वही कम्प्यूजन हमारे दिमाग में बना हुआ है जो कम्प्यूजन सुबह रेडियो से खबर सुनकर बना हुआ था। वहाँ एक्सीडेंट हुआ है इससे ज्यादा कोई खबर इस स्टेटमेंट में नहीं दी गई है। मैं फिर आपके माध्यम से सरकार से यह निवेदन करूंगा कि यह बताया जाए कि इन्क्वायरी कमीशन बैठाया गया या नहीं? दूसरे दोषी लोगों को सजा दी गई है या नहीं यानी किस कारण से उन लोगों को यह दोष करना पड़ा यह बताने का कष्ट करें। तीसरे एक लाख रुपये का कम्पनसेशन की मांग करता हूँ कि यह उनको देने की अविलम्ब घोषणा की जाए। धन्यवाद।

श्री शंकर बयसल सिंह (बिहार) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मुझे सबसे पहले इस बात की खुशी है कि श्री-अहलुवालिया साहब की आवाज में वही तशबीह है जो इधर बैठकर बोलने में हुआ करती थी। उधर बैठ कर भी ऐसा लगता है कि बिरोधी दल के सदस्य के रूप में बैठे हुए बोल रहे हैं।

राज्य रेल मंत्री जी ने जो बयान हमारे सामने रखा है और जिस तरह से उन्होंने अपनी आवाज में कण्ठा भरकर इस स्टेटमेंट को पढ़ा है उससे जाहिर है कि उनको जरूर इस बात का दुःख है। सदन भी उनके दुःख में शामिल है इसमें दो राय नहीं है। मैं स्पष्टीकरण के रूप में तीन-चार बातें जानना चाहूंगा। एक यह कि मृत व्यक्तियों की पहचान हुई

या नहीं? यदि पहचान हुई तो स्टेटमेंट में आपकी उसका जिक्र करना चाहिए था। दूसरे यह कि गलती किस की हुई इस बारे में आपने कुछ नहीं बताया। आपको मेरिटिकेशन के रूप में यह पता लगाकर बताना चाहिए कि किस की गलती से यह दुर्घटना हुई? तीसरे यह कि जो लोग मरे हैं उसमें दो रेलवे कर्मचारी भी हैं। एक तो मोटरमैन है और दूसरा गाई है। 9 व्यक्तियों का आपने जिक्र किया। इस सत्र की जब स्टेटमेंट दी जाती है किसी भी मंत्री की ओर से तो यह भी लिखा जाता है या कहा जाता है कि रेल के जो कर्मचारी इसमें मरे हैं उनके आश्रितों को हम कोई न कोई काम का जरिया देंगे जिससे एक भावना प्रकट होती है। इसको भी नोट करना चाहिए कि जो कर्मचारी मरे हैं उनके आश्रितों को कहीं भी रेलवे की सेवा में मौका मिलना चाहिए। अंतिम बात मैं यह कहना चाहूंगा कि वर्ष की शुरुआत अभी हुई है तो इस तरह की दुर्घटनाओं का तोफा देश को न दें। इसलिए जो शुरुआत होगी, वही सिलसिला साल भर चलता रहेगा। आज जैसा कि हमारे भाई श्री अहलुवालिया जी ने कहा, अखबारों में 15 की संख्या निकली है और आप 9 कह रहे हैं। आप ही की बात हम सब मान लेते हैं लेकिन आप इस बात के लिए आज से दृढ़ प्रतिज्ञा हो जाइये कि भविष्य में इस तरह की दुर्घटना न हो और अगर दुर्घटना होगी तो उसके लिए जिनका कसूर है उन कसूरवारों को उनकी ज्यादतियों के लिए सजा मिलनी चाहिए। यही बात मैं आपके माध्यम से कहना चाहता हूँ।

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal). The main point is that it is an accident that some accidents are not taking place in the Railways on a much greater number. There should have been many more accidents.

[The Vice-Chairman (Shri Shankar Dayal Singh) in the Chair]

Therefore, at the beginning I say that the Railway Administration, running of the railways, the maintenance

nance of the track, the signalling, the electrification, the whole railway system, has come to such a pass that similar accidents should have taken on a much bigger scale in the country. Therefore, it is an accident that some such accidents are not taking place in the country. The important point that emerges from the Statement is that the Government says nine people were killed. The Government has no independent agency to find out how many people were killed. Therefore, this is a statement they have prepared on the basis of the report given by the local rail authorities. Therefore, this is an understatement. Many more people have died and some dead bodies have been removed, because the accident took place at an odd hour and also just going through the description that while one train was standing, another train was coming with full speed at such a moment and there was a collision. As a result of this collision it is most likely that casualties would be much more than what the Statement says. Why I say so is because I live quite near to the place where the accident has taken place. It is in the city of Calcutta itself. There is a bending, a curve. It is near the curve that the accident has taken place. It is impossible for the two trains to run on the same line if there had not been the signalling error. Therefore, it is because of the signalling error that the collision has taken place. Therefore, the first point is why was there a signalling error after electrification and after automatic signalling? You may kindly remember the signalling on the railways is automatic. Therefore, electrified automatic signalling committed an error. Why was the error committed? It is because it is not being maintained properly. Nobody is there to see whether the system is properly working or not. Therefore it is not a signal failure but a human failure. The responsibility for the human failure should lie on the management of the Railways. Railways of late have been giving up the responsibility of maintenance.

[Shri Gurudas Das Gupta]

The maintenance work is now being done by the contractors. Because the contractors are doing the work, not the departments, therefore, the work is sub-standard. As a result of this there is likelihood of more errors. Just to see that the economy drive is properly implemented, the Railway is giving up its work and because of that the contractors are getting the job. Because of the contractors' work, the work is sub-standard, is not being done properly, and signalling is not being maintained properly. Therefore, the accident is due to, the lapse not on the part of the motormen, not on the part of the persons who have been driving the train, but it is because of the grave decision of the Railways to surrender its responsibility to the contractors. Therefore, my first point is—I know Mr Bhakta Charan Das is not competent to give this answer; but I wish the competent Minister gave the answer in a competent way—whether security risk will be taken into consideration by the Government while the maintenance work is being given to the contractors. I demand that the contractors must not be given any job. Every piece of Railway work should be done by the Department themselves. These accidents are taking place because the work is being given to the contractors. Therefore, my first question is, whether the Government shall realise—after 9 lives were lost—after such an accident has taken place—that it is wrong on the part to give the work to the contractors. May I know from the Minister whether that system is going to be changed? This is number one.

Number two this accident had taken place at the odd hour as my colleagues have been saying. The travellers have been mostly the bread-winners of the families. Therefore if you say that we will pay them some amount just as gratis Government is generous to pay them compensation, please don't become so generous. We don't want you to be

generous in respect of compensation. We want you to tell us whether you are going to provide jobs to at least one member of the family of the person who has been involved in the accident and who has died. It is your fault. It is because of your fault that the people have lost their lives. Therefore, I do not want you to take a generous stand and say "Yes, we will pay them Rs 1 lakhs

आप जानते हैं कि पहले राजा-महाराज बोलते थे कि तुमको 10 हजार दूँगे, 5 हजार दूँगे।

We are having Malharaj in the hall. महाराजाधिराज की आदत थी कि रुपये दे दूँगे। आदमी अगर मर गया तो क्या रुपये से उसकी जान आयेगी?

Therefore, it is not a question of payment of compensation.

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया :
रोटी छीन लेंगे, रोजगार बंद कर देंगे।

SRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : So the point is, it is an important thing I am discussing. I wish the hon. Member does not interject. It is an important thing.

उपसभापति (श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह) :
वे अपनी आदत के अनुसार बोलेंगे। आप अपनी बात बोलिये।

श्री गुरुदास दास गुप्त : आदत नहीं होनी चाहिए।

When people are dying, when accidents are taking place, is it unusual on my part to expect the House to behave in a different way? The point is, I do not want compensation on compassionate grounds. I want the people who had been mostly bread-winners, who were poor because they were the people who came to the markets of Calcutta and took the purchased articles to their own places to sell them and earn their livelihood. Therefore, these people were the bread-winners. Let the Government be not generous as to pay them Rs 1 lakh compensation. I want the Railway Minister to tell me if they are ready to provide jobs to at least one

member in each of the families of the persons killed in the accident. They should consider this. This is number two.

Number 3, it is essential that the railway men who have been killed their kith and kin also should be provided with jobs.

Number 4, I have no faith whatsoever in this administration. Excuse me for being so caustic, particularly when a younger colleague of mine has made a statement but kindly allow me to be caustic because I have no confidence whatsoever in the administration of the Railways. They are not the persons to find out whose lapse it was. The Railway Ministry officials will not be able to bring out the reason of the lapse because they are in the fault. The people who have committed the fault cannot recover the source of their fault. Therefore, I want an independent enquiry it may somewhat appear to be strange to you because are generally not accustomed to this type of demand. But, since a large number of people have died in the heart of Calcutta—since it is because of the lapse on the part of the Railway administration—since failure of the signalling—since the trains collided of the whole thing was because of the total failure of the Railway administration to maintain the signalling, just a departmental enquiry will not bring out the truth. It would become just an eye-wash होना, होना चाहिए वा, यह

नहीं होना चाहिए, मदद करेंगे, जहर करेंगे।

If the Government is serious—despite everything, this Government is serious Government—despite their political strength in the Parliament, they are serious Government and if they are serious, will they consider this demand more seriously? I want an independent enquiry to be instituted to find out who was responsible for it.

Lastly, I want the Minister to tell us considering the security hazard they will not give the contractors the job of looking after the maintenance

of the different departments, including signalling.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA (Rajasthan): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the accident has taken place about 5 kilometre away from my house. The moment I came to know about this accident, I called Calcutta to find out what actually has happened. You will be surprised there was a very big noise and that noise, the thud, because of the accident, was heard about five kilometres away. I cannot understand why the Divisional Railway Manager reached the place of accident only after one hour. From the headquarters that place could be reached within 10 minutes. Even granting for the worst traffic in Calcutta at that time, he could have reached there within 20 minutes. I do not understand why he has taken such a long time. As Mr. Das Gupta has said, it is complete carelessness on the part of the staff. Immediate action should be taken against the erring staff. Otherwise they will continue to be irresponsible and people will continue to die.

Then, as I understand, at least 25 people have died. I do not know from what source of information the Government says only nine persons died. Scores of people have been injured. This is all in my information which I have received from my friends, from my family members, who are living in that area. I would like a clarification from the Minister on this.

The most important point is, an accident has taken place, many are dead and many are injured. Probably, some compensation will be given. But I cannot understand what prevented, if not the Railway Minister the Deputy Railway Minister or any other Minister from going to Calcutta by today's morning flight if not by a special aircraft. What made him wait till this evening, for about 24 hours? There was a flight in the

[Shri Santosh Bagrodia]

morning. Probably they may say they did not have the information. But it is not satisfactory. It is a very serious lapse on the part of the Minister for Railways. I would like to have a clarification why they did not decide to go in the morning.

Coming to compensation, it is not a grant of mercy. It is obligatory on the part of the Railways. Why have they not mentioned the amount to be given? You simply say 'ex-gratia'. Why are you so casual? Why Mr Ahluwalia had to ask for Rs 1 lakh? We would like to know the amount they are going to pay. Also one of the dependants of each dead, who was an Indian citizen, must be given a job by the Government.

Then, I demand an independent inquiry by a retired judge. No departmental inquiry is going to satisfy us.

On the last point I beg to differ with Mr Das Gupta. He said work should not be given to contractors. It is not a question of who is doing the work. The country cannot afford to do all the work departmentally. It is physically impossible. For example, servicing of telephone or laying of cable lines may be allowed to be done by private contractors. But you appoint supervisors. You must know the people who are responsible. If work is not done to satisfaction, as per the rules and the specification, what are the supervisors doing? Why are you not taking action against them? With these clarifications, I thank you very much, Sir.

श्रीमती सत्या बहिन (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
उपसभोध्यक्ष महोदय, यह दुर्घटना बड़ी दुःखद दुर्घटना है, जिसमें 9 व्यक्ति मारे जाने की, सूचना माननीय मंत्री जी ने अपने वक्तव्य में दी है। मंत्री जी ने यह नहीं बताया है कि इतनी बड़ी दुर्घटना हुई है इसमें कितने लोगों क्षतिग्रस्त हुए हैं और वह इन्हीं मालगाड़ी के थे या यात्री गाड़ी के थे। मैं समझती हूँ अगर

यात्री गाड़ी के एक या दो इन्हीं क्षतिग्रस्त हो जायें तो मरने वालों की संख्या 5 या 9 से ज्यादा हो सकती है। इस संघर्ष में मैं यह जानना चाहती हूँ कि जी लोग मारे गये हैं या जो घायल हुए हैं उनमें कितने बच्चे हैं, महिलाएँ कितनी हैं? यह संख्या इस वक्तव्य में ठीक से नहीं बताई गई है। दूसरी बात दुर्घटना की जांच के संघर्ष में बताया है। यह जांच कब तक की जा सकती है? जो बीमे की राशि या मुआवजा दिया जाएगा वह जांच के बाद दिया जाएगा या पहले दिया जाएगा। धन्यवाद।

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, it appeared that the accident took place owing to the human error and system failure. I would like to know what steps have been taken so that such tragedies may not recur. It is mentioned by the hon. Minister that in addition to nine people killed, five are injured among whom one has been discharged from the hospital. However, what is the condition of rest of the four? Are they improving or their condition is deteriorating in the hospital? Whenever such accidents take place, the usual procedure in the Government is that undue delay takes place for handing over the bodies to the members of the bereaved families for want of proper attention to undertake post-mortem and other things. I would like to advise you to do away with the post-mortem and without carrying the bodies to the mortuary and subjecting the members of the families to untold sufferings, you can straightway hand over the bodies to them. Sir, the compensation is much less than compared to similar accidents in case of Indian Airlines. So I would like to advise the Government to be a little bit liberal in payment of ex-gratia as well as for providing some jobs to the members of the bereaved families. Thank you.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, it is very apparent when the Prime Minister expressed regret

that the Government was not informed in time about the accident, such a lapse is unprecedented. This Government is new that I can understand. My first question will be, at what time did the Rail Bhawan receive information about this accident because the All India Radio, I heard myself this morning, broadcast and the papers carry it? At what time did the Rail Bhawan receive this information and at what time did they inform the Government? As it appears, they did not inform them till this afternoon. Who is responsible for this lapse? This I want to know. I would like to know why the Railway Administration at Calcutta took so much time, took more than one hour, and as a colleague of ours, whose house is there, is mentioning, it is only ten minutes walk from there, why was so much time taken?

Secondly, is it correct as our hon. colleague here Mr Gurudas Das Gupta is saying that the contractors are maintaining this line? Is it so that they are responsible for maintenance of signals also? If it is so, the Railway Minister should tell us whether this is true only about this section of the lines or other lines also and what is the system of contractors being given additional responsibility also? *Prima facie* the Railway officials must have told him about the cause of accident. Was it human error only or signal error or was it for some other reason? *Prima facie* if he has some information, he should share it with the House. I hope it was not sabotage. But if it was so he must tell us and I also want to know what is the system of checking the maintenance of the lines, maintenance of the equipments, maintenance of signals and human management there, maintenance of cabins also and when was all this last inspected and checked? This I would like to know. Then I would also like to know whether the Minister who has gone there to the spot will make some statement tomorrow. Will he give some informa-

tion tomorrow? After he has studied the whole thing on the spot, I would like to know the action he has taken about it and the information he has collected because this is only a very little information. There is hardly anything which would satisfy the House. I demand that the Minister should make a detailed statement when he comes back so that it may be a lesson to the Railways, particularly in Calcutta and other places of the country. This callousness, this utter casual attitude to human life, is very regrettable. The Government in its own interest, in the interest of its own reputation and in the interest of its own credibility, should hold an open inquiry. A statement should be made by the Minister with full information on his return. When human life is involved, it is not a question of party. I demand that the Minister should make a statement tomorrow giving very detailed information and I also support the demand made by my hon. colleague that there should be an independent inquiry and whatever information about the causes etc. the Minister has at the moment should be given to us.

कुमारी रुईया खातून (मध्य प्रदेश) :
उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहती हूँ कि घायलों के इलाज के लिए जो राशि रेलवे विभाग खर्च कर रहा है और उस राशि में क्या अनुग्रह राशि जो दी जा रही है उन लोगों को, उसमें इस राशि को भी एड कर दिया जा रहा है क्या ?

यह जो मालगाडी से ट्रेन टकराई है, तो उस मालगाडी में भी किस तरह के गूड्स थे और उसका भी नुकसान हुआ है क्या, कितना हुआ है और किस तरीके का नुकसान हुआ है, इसका भी थोड़ा ब्योरा हमें मिलना चाहिए ?

जो यह सिगनल की इश्वरस्था नहीं थी, क्या जो दो गाड़ियों का टकराव हुआ

[कुंभारी मईदा खतून]

है, तो क्या सिगनलज की व्यवस्था नहीं थी, इसकी जिम्मेदारी किस पर आती है? क्या रेलवे विभाग पर आती है, स्टेशन पर आती है, रेलवे के गाडी के चालक पर आती है, किस तरीके से इसकी जिम्मेदारी आती है?

कुमारी सरोज खापड़ (महाराष्ट्र) :
उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, माननीय मंत्री जी का यह बयान सुनने के बाद मैं कन्फ़िड हो गई हूँ एक बात से कि लगता है कि आज सदन में श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह ग्रहलुवालिया ने जब तक इस विषय को सदन के सामने नहीं रखा, तब तक सरकार को इस दुर्घटना की जानकारी नहीं मिली होगी ग्रहलुवालिया जी के बयान के बाद ही सरकार की नींद खुली हो, ऐसा महसूस हो रहा है इस स्टेटमेंट को देखने के बाद और इसीलिए मुझे यह कहना पड़ रहा है।

मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से दो-तीन क्लैरिफिकेशन्स जानना चाहूंगी—एक तो जैसे यहाँ पर सारे क्लिगज ने कहा है कि इंडिपेंडेंट इन्क्वायरी होनी चाहिए—मैं भी उनका मजबूती से इस विषय में साथ देना चाहूंगी।

दूसरा, मुझे यह पूछना है कि हम लोगो को तो करीब-करीब सुबह ही जैसे उठे, अखबार को पढ़ने के बाद तो पता ही चल गया था कि कलकत्ता में ऐसी दुर्घटना हुई है, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहूंगी कि क्या माननीय मंत्री जी को इस दुर्घटना की जानकारी सुबह मिली थी और अगर मिली थी, तो किस वक्त मिली थी, अगर सुबह-सुबह जानकारी मिली थी, तो सरकार अपने आप खुद स्टेटमेंट के साथ उपस्थित क्यों नहीं हुई?

तीसरा, जो मैं जानना चाहूंगी जैसे टेलीग्राफ में खबर छपी है, उसमें लिखा हुआ है :—

“One person who was on the scene a few minutes after the disaster said the goods train driver could not be found.”

क्या यह बात सच है कि ड्राइवर की भी मौत आन दी स्पॉट हुई है या ड्राइवर भाग गया है।

श्रीमन्, मैं एक बात और भी पूछना चाहूंगी माननीय मंत्री जी से कि सुनते हैं कि अक्सर इस पेसेंजर ट्रेन में जो हाकर्स छोटा-मोटा काम करते हैं उस इलाके में, वह हाकर्स अप एंड डाऊन करने वाले विद्यार्थी और पार्ट-टाईम काम करने वाले लोग जो हैं, वह अक्सर इस ट्रेन से आते जाते हैं। तो इस ट्रेन की दुर्घटना में कितने हाकर्स, विद्यार्थी या पार्ट टाईम काम करने वाले जो थे, उसकी भी जानकारी अगर माननीय मंत्री जी दे दें, तो अच्छी बात होगी।

हमें यह सुन कर बड़ी खुशी हुई है कि मंत्री जी की नींद शाम को चार बजे खुली और वह इमीजेटली आज कलकत्ता गये हैं। मुझे बड़ी खुशी होती कि मंत्री जी सुबह साढ़े नौ बजे के हवाई-जहाज से जाते और अभी तक वापिस भी आते और वहाँ की दुर्घटना का सारा हिसाब सदन के सामने रखते, ताकि हमें जानकारी मिलती। यह दो-तीन बातें जो मैंने पूछी हैं उसके बारे में जानकारी चाहूंगी और अंत में यह जरूर कहूंगी एक बात कि कल जब मंत्री जी वापस आयेगे तो उसकी विस्तृत जानकारी सदन के सामने रखने की कृपा करेंगे?

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS:
Mr Vice-Chairman, Sir, honourable Members have expressed their deep concern over the matter. I thank the honourable Members for the really relevant points they have made. Certain important questions have been raised. I would like to inform the honourable Members that immediately after the accident the process of inquiry began. The DRM immediately rushed to the spot along with medical staff and other officers at the divisional level. The Railway Board was informed of the accident at 00.40

A.M. in the night yesterday. I say this because honourable Members have made comments on the working of the Railway Ministry and the Railway Board. Immediately after getting the news of the accident in the early morning the Member (Electrical) was sent to Calcutta to inquire into the cause of the accident because the accident took place on the double electrical line. He was, therefore sent immediately in the morning. Since morning MR and I were busy collecting the exact information. Members mentioned here different versions of the number of persons killed in the accident. Some Members put the figure at 15, some mentioned the figure of 25. But no figure is correct. Whatever information we have received so far, according to that nine persons were killed and all were adults. I would request honourable Members, if they have any information with them of the people killed, they may please give us that information and we will take necessary steps.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Mr. Minister, you are making a very responsible statement. You must know this is not the Members' job to give you correct figures. You should get us the information.

SHRI V NARAYANASAMY: It is for the Government to give the correct information.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH): Mr. Minister, honourable Members have asked questions for clarification from you. You have to give them the replies. You have not put questions to them for information.

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: I am giving whatever information we have so far collected. According to our information nine persons have died. Members have mentioned different figures of the persons killed...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH): They are quoting from newspapers.

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: They are quoting from newspapers. We are trying to get the exact information. Our effort is still on to get the exact information. The Minister of Railways along with the Board members and other officials went to the spot to get the correct information from the site of accident. (Interruptions) The exact information we have received so far shows that nine persons have died. (Interruptions)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH): Please hear the Minister first. I am not allowing any interruptions. Let the Minister make his reply first.

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: Prima facie the accident occurred on account of the failure of the staff. (Interruptions) I may tell you that it is reported that prima facie the accident was caused by the failure of the staff. Some Members asked about compensation. Under the Railway Compensation Rules, 1990 we have a provision for compensation starting from Rs. 16,000 to Rs. 2 lakhs. Immediately ex-gratia to the extent of Rs. 5,000 was given to the families of the deceased for grievous injuries. We have a provision of Rs. 1,000 to 2,000 and for minor injuries the provision is Rs. 250. And, Sir, for minor injuries, we have a provision of two hundred and fifty rupees. All these things are being done.

Members have asked whether the bodies have been identified or not. If now we have been able to identify six bodies and the rest of the bodies are yet to be identified and our officials are trying their best to identify the dead bodies. The Minister of Railways is proceeding to the place.

Some honourable Members suggested that there should be some independent inquiry. Sir, we have the

[Shri Bhakta Charan Das]

Commissioner of Railway Safety and that Commission is not under the Railways, but is under the administrative control of the Civil Aviation Ministry. It is a totally independent body. Even though some experienced railway officers and senior engineers are there, this organization is totally free from the control of the Railway Ministry or the Railway Board and they have their own independent views.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Sir, I want one clarification. The Minister is saying something about the Commissioner for Railway Safety and he says that they are not attached to the Railway Ministry, but to the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Now what happened in Kerala? Sir, in Kerala, some time back, there was an accident in Kerala and the Report of the Commissioner of Railway Safety then said that due to a tornado that was there this accident took place! But that was not the actual cause. This is the kind of inquiry that is being conducted by the Commissioner for Railway Safety. A subsequent inquiry was conducted which found the earlier finding wrong. Therefore, we cannot totally depend on the Report of the Commissioner for Railway Safety.

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: It is not a fact, Sir. (Interruptions).

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: It is a fact. I am telling you, it is a fact. It was widely reported in the Press. But you do not know. (Interruptions).

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: Mr Narayanasamy, the Railway Safety Wing is under the administrative control of the Civil Aviation Ministry and it is not under our control. They are free to do their work and they have started their work. The Commissioner for Railway Safety, Eastern Region has already started his work since this morning. Therefore, we hope that they will definitely give their in-

dependent version. Whoever is qualified—I can assure the Members, because some honourable Members raised doubts—would be brought to book and taken to task. With regard to maintenance, I can tell you, Sir, that as against 50 accidents that occurred during the period from April to December, 1989, only 41 accidents have taken place during the corresponding period this year. (Interruptions)....

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: What a great consolation!

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, at least on this score, there should be a condemnation of his attitude. He finds consolation that nine accidents less have taken place!

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: No; I am not getting any consolation. (Interruptions).

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: This is their attitude towards human lives!. (Interruptions).

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: Sir, I would like to tell the honourable Members that I am very serious about these accidents even if they are less in number. Whatever accidents have taken place so far, whether they are because of human failure or because of poor maintenance, we are taking them very seriously only and we will not exclude anybody who is guilty of negligence, whether in the matter of tracks or in the matter of signalling.

Some honourable Member raised the question of contractors also being held responsible. But, as far as our information goes, it is because of the signalling defect and the failure of the railway staff that this has happened. So, this is not in any way connected with the contractors. Without contractors, it is not possible to execute the work.

Sir, the honourable Members have expressed their deep concern and whatever doubts they have raised will be inquired into and the concerned authorities will be given proper

direction The honourable Minister of Railways is visiting the spot today and tomorrow he will be there on the spot and he will find out about the things.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Then will you make the statement tomorrow?.. (Interruptions)...

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: I can assure the Members that we will take strong measures.. (Interruptions)...

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY (West Bengal). Sir, the honourable Minister has accused the Railway staff... (Interruptions) ..But I would like to say that it is due to the careful attitude of the Railway staff to avoid accidents that most of the accidents have not taken place which should otherwise have taken place. (Interruptions)... So this attitude of the Railway Ministry and the Railway Board is condemnable, and this statement by the Minister of State should be withdrawn. (Interruptions)

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Sir, you protect our interests and ask him to make a statement tomorrow (Interruptions)

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह) : देखिए बागडोरिया जी, बात यह है कि कल जब मंत्री महोदय आयेंगे, जनैश्वर मिश्र जी... (व्यवधान)...

श्री गुरुदास दास गुप्ता : कल मंत्री महोदय जायेंगे, आयेंगे कब ?

उपसभा यक्ष (श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह) : नहीं, इन्होंने कहा है कि आज जा रहे हैं। (व्यवधान) ..

Please hear. The State Minister is telling that perhaps the Minister is going there tonight. Tomorrow he will come back. I think tomorrow he will come here in the House and I will also convey the feelings of the House to him. And also I am telling the State Minister to convey the sentiments of the Members to the Minister.

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: I assure this House that I will convey to him the feelings of the Members. We will take it seriously that the Members have expressed their deep concern.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह) : सदन की कार्यवाही कल सुबह 11 बजे तक के लिए स्थगित की जाती है।

The House then adjourned at fifty-two minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, the 8th January, 1991.