

offered is consistently inefficient. I think it is rather uncharitable. For example, you take the new services that have been introduced, you can go to Jaipur—I flew myself—in half an hour.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI : Provided the plane starts in time. Usually they are delayed by two hours or three hours. Yesterday's plane was late by three hours.

SHRI N. G. GORAY : There should be no complacency.

DR. KARAN SINGH : It is not complacency. I can assure the hon. Member. What I am saying is that to say that the Indian Airlines' service everywhere is inefficient, is not correct. Our trunk services are as good as anywhere in the world. I agree that there are delays due to some unfortunate thing. There is always scope for improvement both as far as baggage handling is concerned and as far as food is concerned, and we are seized of the matter. I was just submitting that a blanket condemnation of the type that my hon. senior friend Mr. Goray made is, I do not think, really justified.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : May I know if the Ministry is contemplating any machinery to see that when disputes arise, they are tackled immediately and efficiently? I ask this question because I feel that the inefficiency to which my friend has drawn attention, is mostly due to the planes not going in time, cancellation of the programme and so on, whereas so far as the service is concerned, except probably food, I think it is satisfactory.

DR. KARAN SINGH : As the honourable Members know there is already a machinery under the Industrial Disputes Act. And I must agree that industrial relations have been one of the weak points and that a large number of agreements have been signed; now only one or two agreements are remaining. I am hopeful that the situation will improve. The machinery is there under the Industrial Disputes Act. It is already laid down and we know what exactly is to be done and at which time. The only problem is that that machinery has not wholly succeeded in solving the problems yet. But we are seized of the matter.

SHRI JOACHIM ALVA : The honourable Minister is aware that I had put him a question on the last occasion which I had also put to his distinguished predecessor. Dr. Sanjiv Reddy, that the Estimates Committee found that a sum of over Rs. 30 lakhs was paid as commission to travel agents for booking passengers on the Indian Airlines. We can understand Commission being paid by Air India because Air India has been a very big competitor in the world. But the Indian Airlines is not so. How is it that they make over Rs. 30 lakhs to the travel agents? Has the honourable Minister made any effort since then in this regard or has the figure at least come down to Rs. 3 lakhs?

DR. KARAN SINGH : I am not aware what question the honourable Member had asked of Dr. Sanjiv Reddy. It must have been quite a long time ago. I will require notice if he wants to ask specifically about it. I may only say that travel agent's commission is an accepted principle all over the world and we are an IATA carrier. Therefore, 5 per cent commission is payable to the travel agents for seats which are bought by them. This is a well-accepted practice.

AVRO AIRCRAFT

*242. SHRI K. C. PANDA :

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA :
SHRI BIRA KESARI DEO : f
SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO :

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the two Avro planes which met with an accident sometime ago at Madurai had been defined as below standard by the Enquiry Committee and if so, what action had been taken to bring such aircraft up to standard; and

(b) whether the said two Avro planes were cleared by the Committee for Commercial Flights before they were taken on flight?

f The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bira Kesari Deo.

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH) : (a) Only one Avro aircraft was involved in an accident near Madurai on 9th December, 1971. This aircraft (VT-DXG) was among the six planes tested by the Technical Committee appointed by Government last year and found satisfactory its performance being above the 'net' requirements. The aircraft had also passed the prescribed performance tests after scheduled engine changes on 5th August and 10 October, 1971. The findings of the Court of Inquiry which investigated this accident indicate that the mishap took place due to a navigational error and was not related to aircraft performance in any way. Another Avro (VT DXO) was involved in a landing accident at Trivandrum on 17th December 1971 in which the nose-landing gear broke due to poor landing technique of the pilot.

(b) Both aircraft carried valid certificates of airworthiness issued by the Director General of Civil Aviation and complied with Airworthiness requirements in all respects.

SHRI BIRA KESARI DEO : How is it that only the Avro type of aircraft are meeting with accidents? Is it a fact that while the Avro was in flight—because only one passenger was alive in this accident and in the inquiry he said—this accident was due to lightning or some such thing? Last year also when the pilots had called on a strike, is it a fact that the pilots had objected that the Avros were below the standards and what has the Government done about it?

Dr. KARAN SINGH : It is not correct to say that only Avro aircraft are meeting with accidents. In fact, as I had pointed out to this honourable House, the Avros had an excellent safety record, a hundred per cent. This is the first accident of the Avro in Madurai. Then it is also not correct that there was only one survivor. There were ten survivors. I have the report of the commission before me. There is nothing thereabout it being hit by lightning. It says very clearly that the accident was as a result of navigational error, in fact, negligent navigation on the part of the pilot. He was sixty miles off course and when he

started descending there was a hill which should not have been there had he been on his course. With regard to the other question about Avros I have made several statements in this honourable House, a committee looked into the matter, then there was a task force which also looked into the matter, and we have assured ourselves that this aircraft is fully safe and their maintenance is being properly looked into.

SHRI R. T. PARTHASARATHY : I would like to have an assurance from the hon. Minister that from all the technical angles Avro aircraft are completely airworthy. Can he give a categorical assurance to that effect? Secondly, with reference to the enquiry committee under justice Sadasivam in relation to the Madurai air accident have the government received a complete report and if so whether the government is fully satisfied with the report of the enquiry committee?

DR. KARAN SINGH : On the basis of the technical information that is available to government, I can say categorically that the Avros are completely safe when flown within the limits which are laid down by the manufacturers. As far as the report is concerned, I have got the report and it has been our practice to place copies of these accident reports in the Library of the Parliament so that anybody who wishes to refer to them can do so and I intend to do the same this time also. We have accepted the report with certain comments by the Director General of Civil Aviation.

श्री सीताराम केसरी : सभापति जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने जैसा अपने वक्तव्य में कहा कि पायलट की गलती की वजह से यह एक्सीडेंट हुआ, तो मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या यह सब है कि एवरो के सम्बन्ध में इंजीनियर्स और पायलट्स के बीच में मतभेद रहा है कि इतनी हाइट के बाद वह चर नहीं सकेगा ठीक से इस सम्बन्ध में क्या मंत्री जी इस बात पर कोई रोशनी डालेंगे? दूसरे मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि वह पायलट जिस की गलती की वजह से यह एक्सीडेंट हुआ उस के लिए क्या मैं यह मान लूँ कि वह पायलट कापीटेंट नहीं था

और उस के बाद भी उस को वह एवरो चलाने को दिया गया ?

डा० कर्ण सिंह : जहाँ तक माननीय सदस्य के पहले प्रश्न का सम्बन्ध है कि एवरो के संबंध में पायलट और इंजीनियर्स में मतभेद है, ऐसी बात नहीं थी। लोड के संबंध में कुछ मतभेद था, लेकिन लोड जितना होना चाहिए उस से काफी कम था। उन्होंने कहा है कि नेग्लिजेंट नेवीगेशन के कारण एसीडेंट हुआ लेकिन पायलट की जानकारी तो ठीक थी। यह बड़ा दुर्भाग्य है और दुख का विषय है कि एक पायलट जिसके पास अपना लाइसेंस हो, इस प्रकार की गलती करे, लेकिन मनुष्य मनुष्य है, गलती तो कर ही सकता है।

SHRI M. K. MOHITA : Although the hon. Minister had been pleased to state that technically Avros are flight-worthy and there is nothing to worry about, the fact remains that there has been a lot of controversy about these Avro aircraft between the pilots on the one hand and government and its technicians and experts on the other. May I ask the hon. Minister as to what is the present position? Have the pilots agreed to fly Avros unreservedly or is there some reservation or any point of dispute or controversy that still remains to be resolved?

DR. KARAN SINGH : There are two different matters. As far as government is concerned, we have satisfied ourselves, as we must, to fulfil our responsibility. We have satisfied ourselves, with the manufacturers, with the users, and that the plane is safe. As far as the question of pilots accepting this is concerned, as I said in reply to an earlier question, this is one of the agreements that has not been signed with the pilots. They still sometimes raise doubts. It is very unfortunate because our technical advice is that it is entirely safe. I am hoping that the agreement with the pilots will also be signed and then the whole unfortunate and unhappy chapter will finally be closed.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : I want to state that the Minister is taking a great risk

in stating that Avros are air-worthy. Both the Ramanujam Committee and the earlier Committee have given certain findings. You are refusing to disclose what are those findings and pilots are asking for those defects. It has been proved that the defects are of hazardous nature. The defects are second segment climb, shortfall in twin engine climb performance and low power output in the twin engine. In the face of these, how can the Minister say that Avros are air-worthy? May I know whether the government will give an assurance that the reports of both the committees will be scrutinised by the pilots' association? It is very necessary because it is hazardous for the public.

Therefore, Sir, the Government must come out to satisfy the public as well as the technicians who are employed by the Indian Airlines and give a satisfactory reply. Otherwise, the defect to the extent of 0.01 the shortfall of 0.01, is a complete hazard as has been stated by the Directorate or somebody like that. So, Sir, I would like to know whether the Government would agree to it. Otherwise, there is no use in repeating this.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right.

DR. KARAN SINGH : Sir, I would like to make one thing very clear: The Government is as keen as anybody else, if not more—and, in fact, I am more keen than anybody else because this is my responsibility as the Minister—that we should not fly planes which are not airworthy and there is no question whatsoever of taking a complacent view. Earlier, when this problem was raised, we set up a Committee the Ramamurthi Committee and afterwards, a Task Force was also set up.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Publish the Report.

DR. KARAN SINGH : Yes, the Report is available. A Task Force was set up to process that Report with the Chairman of the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd., the General Manager of the Indian Airlines and the Director-General of Civil Aviation. Sir, under the rules, under the law passed by this Parliament, the Director-General of Civil Aviation is the final authority with regard to airworthiness of aircraft—they are all

technical people—are! it is not the Mini ter. It is a technical matter and. Sir, there is no plane in India which flies without a Certificate of Airworthiness from the Director-General of Civil Aviation, whether it is Avro or Boeing 747 or Dakota. Sir, I can tell the hon. Member that if there is any reason or any doubt, I would be the first one to say that it should not be flown and I have no desire whatsoever to fly such planes. But, Sir, the Avros are not in India.

Then, Sir, he suggested that at the Report should be finally okayed by the Pilots' Association. I am afraid that is a position which we are not in a position to accept, because, after all, the Pilots' Association cannot sit in judgement upon something which the DGCA, the Indian Airlines and the HAL have reported upon. They may have their own views. But, certainly technical people are all technical people and we should give due weight to their views. Therefore, I cannot think that such a body can sit in judgement over the authority which is established under the law.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Sir, I am on a point of order. Sir, the hon. Minister has given some information and brought in the name of the DGCA or whatever it is. I want to know whether it is not a fact . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : No second question, please.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Sir, I am not asking another question. But, Sir, I say that he has given a wrong information by saying . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, please.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : . . . that the DGCA has completely analysed, etc.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, no.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : That does not arise, Sir,

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, please. Mr. Minister, please do not answer that. Yes Mr. Shejwalkar.

SHRI N. K. SHEJWALKAR : Sir, in

continuation of the answer, I would like to request the hon. Minister to tell us whether the Committee, about which he just now talked, has found that the maintenance of the Avros was not satisfactory and, further whether there were certain suggestions to improve the machines and certain other things and whether those suggestions have been implemented.

DR. KARAN SINGH : Sir, the Committee did find that there were certain weaknesses in the maintenance and it also made some suggestions with regard to the manufacturing aspect. The Report of the Committee has been given to the HAL, the manufacturing authority, and now they are taking all these into consideration when they are making the planes and when they are renewing the engines. As far as the maintenance is concerned, we are ensuring that all the points which were raised by the Committee are taken into account. Sir, I would like to make one thing clear : I am not trying at all to whitewash something or try to safeguard anybody. The Committee was set up and it did make some findings. Certain improvements in maintenance are required and certain improvements in the manufacture are required and we are trying to do our best to do them. This is our indigenous plane and we want it to be as good as any other plane in the world and therefore, Sir, it is in our interest to see that no weaknesses are there and any weaknesses that are there are removed.

SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR : On an earlier occasion, when the issue came up in the House, we were all of the opinion that the pilots should not refuse to fly this plane, because the Government time and again said that there were no defects in the plane. Now, again the Minister repeats the same story. Put, according to me, according to my information, as the Minister has just now conceded, that the Committee came to the conclusion that there were certain manufacturing defects. Earlier, the Government did not accept it. Even after the Inquiry Committee Report, the Government wants to conceal this fact. Sir, this is not the way to improve the manufacturing defects of a plane. It is true that it is airworthy. But, being airworthy does not mean being devoid of any manufacturing defect. Let us know how many planes were examined

by this Committee and in how many planes such a manufacturing defects were found out by this Committee. Will the hon. Minister give this information to the House? Mr. Chairman, Sir, here the Minister has said that there should not be any blanket condemnation. There should also not be a blanket appreciation. At least as customers I do not see any improvement in the functioning of the Air Lines today . . .

DR. KARAN SINGH : Sir . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is about manufacturing defects.

DR. KARAN SINGH : Sir, I agree that while there should not be any blanket condemnation, there should also not be a blanket appreciation. The Committee examined six of the fourteen planes in the field. I am afraid I do not have the report of the Committee with me, since I did not know that this is going to come up here. But I shall speak from my memory. Six planes were examined. Of these, some were found to be fully satisfactory; in others there were found certain shortfalls . . .

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : How many were fully satisfactory?

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Only one . . .

(*Intermissions*).

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : This is the only point. How many were fully satisfactory? How many were partially defective? And how many were totally defective?

DR. KARAN SINGH : I am afraid I do not have that information with me immediately . . .

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Sir . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Kulkarni, this is Mr. Chandra Shekhar's question, Why are you getting up?!

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : It is a question of our life and death.

DR. KARAN SINGH : Everybody's life and death is equally valuable. I said,

Sir, I do not have with me immediately the information with regard to this question. But this much I can say that after the report each one of these planes was properly maintained. The point which Shri Chandra Shekhar made and which is his worry, is that no plane should be kept which is unsafe. I can say categorically that there is no plane which is unsafe which is flying. If there is any more information required with regard to the Arya Committee, I can furnish it at a later stage.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : Mr. Chairman, my point is that I was one of the persons who condemned the pilots at that time. Now these planes were examined and the Minister is replying to that question. He does not have the information how many of them were fully satisfactory, how many were partially defective and how many were totally defective. We blamed time and again the pilots. But what should we do about the Government if this attitude is adopted by the Government. In spite of repeated requests, the information is not there with the Minister. What is the use of wasting our time here?

DR. KARAN SINGH : I will furnish the information. This information has been given on the previous occasion in detail in the House. It is not as if we are concealing this information. The Committee was set up a long time ago. This has been debated in the House. The information has been given. If any further information is required, we are willing to give it.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Mani. Last question.

SHRI A. D. MANI : May I ask the Minister to tell us frankly why he has appointed another committee to review the findings of the Ramamvitham Committee? May I ask further whether it is not a white washing document? May I also ask whether this aircraft is flying in other parts of the world? This is out-dated.

DR. KARAN SINGH : May I say in response to what Shri Chandra Shekhar has just said that both these reports have been placed in the Library of Parliament. So there is no question of our wanting to conceal anything. I am just

putting it for the record because an impression might be created that we are trying to suppress anything. Both these reports have been placed in the library.

SHRI CHANDRA SHANKHAR : I am not interested in that. My basic point is this. The pilots come to me and they say that I have wrongly condemned them in the House. I am being advised to go to the library. I shall go. But I have no anxiety to be a technical expert on aeroplane. I can also raise a discussion on this if the Minister so likes, but I do not want to be an expert on everything.

SHRI A. D. MANI : The minister has not replied my question.

DR. KARAN SINGH : I am answering your question. Mr. Mani asked whether a further committee was set up to whitewash the Ramamritham Committee report. That it not so. The Ramamritham Committee of the Department of Civil Aviation. After that report was received we set up a very high-powered committee consisting of...

SHRI A. D. MANI : Why ?

DR. KARAN SINGH : ...Air-Marshall Mehra, who is the Chairman of the HAI who manufactured it. Air Vice-Marshall Hussain, who is the General Manager of the Airlines that runs it and Captain G. C. Arya, who is the Director General of Civil Aviation. These are the three agencies involved, the manufacturer, the user and the people who regulate it. Therefore it was necessary that all these three should be involved in process the reports.

U.N. AID FOR BANGLA DESH REFUGEES

*243. SHRI S. KUMARAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India has asked for more U. N. aid for Bangla Desh refugees; and

(b) if so, what is the total amount of aid asked for ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI V. B. CHAVAN) : (a) The Government of

India, on 21st January, 1972, presented an Aide Memoire to the U. N. Fiscal Point in New Delhi detailing the total expenditure that it would have incurred on the refugees from Bangla Desh by the time of their return. The Aide Memoire also pointed out that the total contributions likely to be received from abroad for meeting these expenses would fall considerably short of this expenditure. Since it has been generally accepted that the task of looking after the refugees was an international responsibility, the Aide Memoire requested the U. N. Fiscal Point to :

(i) expedite the delivery of whatever amounts were still available with it in cash or in kind! and

(ii) make a final call on the international community for additional contributions for meeting this international responsibility.

A copy of the Aide Memoire is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix LXXIX, Annexure No. 24]

(b) No specific amount has been asked for. It has merely been pointed out that an additional international effort is required to meet the uncovered gap between the amount spent by India and the total international contributions likely to be received as a result of pledges made till then.

SHRI S. KUMARAN : What is the latest position regarding the number of refugees still remaining in this country ?

SHRI Y. B. CHAVAN : As I had mentioned in the Budget speech, the expenditure up to the end of March was estimated to be of the order of Rs. 325 crores of which about Rs. 120 crores was likely to be in the form of contributions to the budgetary provisions from the international community but of course what is pledged is something more than Rs. 120 crores; but it is very difficult to know whether the whole of it will be received and in what form and after that, whether it will have to be diverted to Bangladesh or not. That is a different matter.

SHRI S. KUMARAN : I asked for the latest number of refugees still in our country.