

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

THE LIGHTNING STRIKE BY PILOTS OF THE INDIAN AIRLINES IN PROTEST AGAINST THE SUSPENSION OF SOME PILOTS FOR REFUSING TO FLY AVRO AIRCRAFT AND THE CONSEQUENT DISRUPTION OF SCHEDULED FLIGHTS

SHRI A. D. MANI (Madhya Pradesh) : Sir, may I, with your permission, call the attention of the Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation to the lightning strike by pilots of the Indian Airlines in protest against the suspension of some pilots for refusing to fly Avro aircraft and the consequent disruption of scheduled flights ?

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI) : Sir, on the 2nd December, the Minister made a statement in this House on the agitation launched by some pilots of Indian Airlines represented by the Indian Commercial Pilots Association. That very night the Management reached an agreement with the Association in conciliation proceedings before the Chief Labour Commissioner, under which the Association agreed to withdraw its directive prohibiting its members from participating in further training connected with the Boeing Project, and restore normal functioning of the air services with immediate effect. The Management agreed to consider withdrawing the suspension order passed against one of its pilots. The Management and the Association also agreed to recommence bilateral discussions in regard to service conditions, wage structure, etc. I am placing a copy of the agreement on the Table of the House.

In view of this agreement, it was hoped that the pilots would resume all their normal functions immediately. The pilots of the Bombay Region, however, continue to refuse to fly the HS-748s alleging defects affecting safety. Of the 14 HS-748 aircraft in the fleet of Indian Airlines six are based in Bombay and the pilots of the Bombay Region initially picked out two as having defects, but refused to fly any of them. The Management was satisfied that these aircraft were in fact, entirely safe, but in order to place the matter beyond any doubt arrangements were made in consultation with the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited—the manu-
facturers of the planes in India—to have them tested by HAL's Test Pilot. Two aircraft were test-flown by the 5th and a signed report was given by the Test Pilot as follows :—

"The flight tests carried out by the HAL Test Pilot have revealed that the safety standards with regard to the aircraft performance are being met satisfactorily.

Other aspects of the aircraft behaviour which do not affect safety have also been checked, and the results are under Examination."

Subsequently, by the 6th two more planes were test-flown with the same result.

In the light of these very clear findings that the HS-748 were entirely safe, the Management expected the pilots to resume services. Unfortunately, they still refused to fly them. A senior officer of Indian Airlines was deputed to Bombay to discuss matters with the pilots in the presence of the HAL Test Pilot and technical officers of the Civil Aviation Department which is responsible for certification of airworthiness of civil aircraft. The pilots, however, still remained intransigent.

In these circumstances, the Management had no alternative but to take appropriate disciplinary measures. 34 HS-748 pilots of the Bombay Region and 7 of the Madras Region have been placed under suspension and charge-sheeted. It has, however, been made clear that if the pilots are willing to resume services the suspensions will be withdrawn but not the charge-sheets. In addition the Police have arrested 2 pilots under the provisions of the Essential Services Maintenance Act.

Even the services operated with types of aircraft other than the HS-748 have now been seriously dislocated throughout the country by pilots offering flimsy pretexts such as sudden sickness or minor snags in the aircraft not affecting safety. Yesterday, the pilots in the Calcutta Region went on a lightning strike and services in the Madras Region were also badly disrupted.

The House will be interested to know that the HS-748 manufactured in India has an excellent record of accident-free service. The aircraft have lodged thousands of hours in commercial flights

under the command of the very pilots who are now casting doubts on their performance and who have themselves made thousands of take-offs and landings on scheduled flights. The Director General of Civil Aviation has confirmed that the performance of the planes is well above the minimum airworthiness requirements prescribed for this type of aircraft in the approved flight manual and by the International Civil Aviation Organization. The conclusion is thus inescapable that the trouble created by the pilots over the HS-748 is little more than a device with which to pressurize the Management to accept their demands.

I am sure the House will fully support us in our effort to restore the situation to normal. I am deeply conscious of the fact that acute inconvenience is being caused to many thousands of people as the result of this totally unwarranted stand adopted by a section of the pilots. I sincerely hope that in the national interest this ill advised action will be withdrawn and normal services restored immediately.

Agreement between the Management of the Indian Airlines and the Indian Commercial Pilots Association

In the light of the prolonged discussions held by the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) with the representatives of the management of Indian Airlines and the Indian Commercial Pilots Association on 2nd December, 1970, at New Delhi, it is agreed as follows :—

(1) The I.C.P.A. will extend its full cooperation for restoration of normalcy in the air service with immediate effect within the existing rules;

(2) The Association will withdraw its directive No. Cal/GS/CIR/562-70, dated 23-11-70 and co-operate with the Management in the Boeing-737 Training Programme.

(3) The Management will consider the lifting of suspension of Capt. Nigam with immediate effect ;

(4) The Management will consider the two Pilots concerned for Boeing-737 Training as early as possible.

(5) The dispute referred to Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) along-with the Union case for implementation of the 9th May 1970 agreement will

be negotiated bilaterally between the parties in order to arrive at a settlement as expeditiously as possible.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal) : Sir, on a point of order . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Wait a minute.

Dr. Mahishi, you have not given a copy of your statement. It will be better if in future a copy of the statement is furnished.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, it is very difficult to ask for clarifications after a very long statement. Would it not be better if we are supplied with copies of the statement? The hon. Minister also has read it very fast—not at the dictation speed. This is a very long statement. Besides, Sir, we have to examine very carefully whether they are suppressing facts, because on the last occasion they misled the Parliament by suppressing two material facts : One, the May Agreement of 1970, and, two, the Award of the Industrial Tribunal of 1970, which was based on the agreement . . .

(Interruptions).

SOME HON. MEMBERS : There is no point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : What is your point of order ?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, I have given two instances . . .

(Interruptions)

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL (Gujarat) : Under what Rule, are you raising your point of order? . . . (Interruptions) Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I am not going to sit down. I am not going to sit down . . . (Interruptions). I cannot be bullied by Mr. Patel. Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, you can reject my point of order. But he need not tell me . . .

(Interruptions)

I shall not take a lesson from Mr. Patel to . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Order, order . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I am not going to sit down. I am not going to sit down . . . (Interruptions) I shall yield to any member of the House, but not to the Swatantra member . . .

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please try to be brief. You said you wanted to raise a point of order. I could not understand what point of order you are making. Therefore, you should try to be brief and make your point of order so that we can resume our discussion on this Calling Attention Motion.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I will abide by your ruling. But don't think that I am going to tolerate the bossism of Mr. Patel. Any ruling you give, I shall obey—instantaneously I shall obey—but if Mr. Patel thinks he is going to beat me down, he will not succeed . . .

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : I am entitled to contest your point of view and that is what I am trying to do . . . (Interruptions). He should be asked to sit down.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : If you possess brains, contest with brains, not with your hand.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : That is what you are doing. He has shown the Bengali spirit by calling me for a fight.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I have got the Bengali spirit, he says. I say the Bengali spirit is a good spirit but the trouble is you have the Morarji's Gujarati spirit.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please sit down. His point of order is that the statement is a bit long and therefore he wanted some time to study it. But the persons who have given notice for this Calling Attention want to proceed with it. There is no point in postponing the discussion. Mr. Mani.

SHRI A. D. MANI (Madhya Pradesh) : I want to raise three points for clarification and I would like the Minister to note down the points and answer all of them and not leave one any of them. While the House is entirely with the Minister in disapproving this un-called for strike

and the disruption of work in the IAC by the Pilots, I would ask whether it is not a fact that the DGCA has already conducted an investigation into the working of the controversial Avro and he himself has recorded his findings that while flying at a height of 14,000 ft. it had shown some defects and these defects have been rectified? It is a matter of safety of the passengers and the lives of the Pilots also. When this has been the finding of the DGCA himself, why cannot she settle this matter by getting the foreign collaborators of the aircraft to have this matter properly enquired into. I do not think any body will be so cussed as to say that he would not fly this aircraft because he wants to spite the Corporation. What stands in the way of an investigation being done with the help of the foreign collaborators of this Avro which is now under dispute? I understand that the Government is thinking of calling in the Air Force Pilots to man the IAC planes. While I agree that in an emergency the Air Force Pilots may have to be called to do civilian work in the Indian Airlines in the interests of national security, I would ask whether she has this aspect in mind that the use of the Air Force for breaking these strike would lead to the Air Force being involved in a controversy? At present the Air Force is not in controversy anywhere. It is a highly respected arm of the fighting forces. I want to ask if she wants an allegation to be made that the IAF is used as a blackleg? Then I understand that apart from the trade union involved, certain political parties are also interested in keeping the strike going. I have no personal information but certain political parties which have not been identified to me, but which have been generally mentioned, are wanting the strike to continue. Sir, we do not want the Indian Airlines staff to become playthings in the hands of political parties. Is there any truth in the allegation that political parties are interested in keeping the strike going? I want an answer.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. SHRIMATI SAROJINI MAHISHI) : It is true, Sir that the DGCA had issued Statement also saying that the airworthiness of the aircraft is in no way affected. But there was a slight point—I can't call it a defect—a point as regards the cruising speed and also as regards a few other things which

did not in any way affect the safety of the aircraft. That was the first thing. Even as regards this thing, the Squadron Leader and the test pilot of the Air Force Mr. Ashok, he went to Bombay and tested it. Representative of the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation and the Directorate of Aeronautics and the Directorate of Engineering of the Indian Airlines all these were on board the aircraft. They have all tested it, and the gradient according to them is 2.2 or so. Its well within the margin of 1.6 and 2.5. 2.5 being the maximum and 1.6 being the minimum, it is between these two at 2.2. His other point pertaining to this particular thing is why the foreign collaborators should not be asked to do this. Now, as regards this thing, if there is the necessity, of course the management can go to the extent of doing that also. But the necessity was not found. Under no circumstances compromise with the airworthiness is made. Safety consideration, being the most important consideration, under no circumstances any compromise is made with this fact, and the Director-General takes full responsibility and he realises the risk involved in this thing and, therefore, after these minor points were cleared, I think the performance was much better. The performance was only restricted by the fact that in climbing 14,000 feet, the time that was given earlier according to the Flight Manual was twenty-four minutes and subsequently it was thirty minutes in actual performance. But that also was set right subsequently and the minor points were all cleared. And number two point which the hon. Member Mr. Mani, raise was why are the Air Force services being utilised. In times of some emergencies Air Force services are being utilised, the main interest being that the air services in the country are not dislocated. And to the best possible extent good services should be given to the citizens of our country. Number three point; according to the hon. Member, political parties are behind this strike. Of course these pilots are not willing to call it a strike; it is non-cooperation according to them. But to the best of our knowledge we don't have any information regarding those political parties who are behind the whole scene, and the hon. Member, if he has any information—he also has got no information—he can pass it on to us and we shall enquire into the matter.

SHRI N. R. MUNISWAMY (Tamil Nadu) : Recently, the associations and

the unions and the guilds have passed resolutions in any emergency meeting that if the suspension order was not withdrawn it would be against the legitimate agitation by their unions and other labour force. Unless it is withdrawn—they have given the intimation—they will resort to other action including direct action. What this direct action is going to be, they have not spelt out. But I wish to ask the Government whether they have got any other alternative arrangement to meet such threats. Direct action would mean something else and so may I know whether they have kept ready any arrangement to meet that threat? Then, Sir, Mr. Kumaramangalam happens to be the part-time Chairman there, and he has one leg in the court and one leg in the management. He is said to be an undisclosed communist. He never says he is a communist, but this undisclosed communist will do havoc. I only want to know whether you have any idea in your mind to have a full-time Chairman to see that this airline is not disrupted. And the fair name of Mr. Kumaramangalam family is at stake now because the pilots in the Airlines, of which he is the Chairman, are holding the country to ransom. So I wish to know whether there is any such motive to have a full-time Chairman. 'Avro' is an indigenously made aircraft and the foreign manufacturers are not happy that we have our own indigenously manufactured Avro. I would like to know whether your Intelligence Wing has furnished you with any information to show whether they are doing any mischief, to show whether the people, who are cruising this aircraft are being pulled by the foreign manufacturers so that they will have a good name for their aircraft and the fair name of this indigenously manufactured aircraft is spoiled.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The hon. Member has asked a series of questions. Firstly with regard to suspension, according to the agreement of 2nd December 1970 the suspension of Mr. Nigam, one of the pilots, was to be withdrawn and accordingly that has been done in keeping with the agreement of that date. As regards the withdrawal of suspension of other pilots it has been made clear in the last statement made in this House that the suspension will be withdrawn but the chargesheet will not be withdrawn and that is in keeping with the policy adopted by the management.

[Dr. (Shrimati) Sarojini Mahishi]

Secondly, about the necessity of having a full-time Chairman, that also has been realised and in the last debate on the Air Corporations (Amendment) Bill it was made quite clear that it was necessary to have a full-time Chairman. The other insinuations that he has made, I do not think, take us anywhere.

The third point is about foreign collaboration. I do not know how the Member suspects such things because we are getting full co-operation from the foreign collaborator and also the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. is making the maximum effort to take the maximum possible precautions before any aircraft is allowed to go on flight and to see that the performance of the aircraft would be quite well for a certain period.

SHRI N. R. MUNISWAMY : About the threat of direct action by them how is the Government going to meet it in case they carry out their threat? I wanted to know about that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : She has already replied that whatever powers they have will be utilised.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : All precautionary measures are being taken. What the direct action is has not been made clear by them, neither the hon. Member nor we know what it is. Anyway, whatever possible precautionary measures we have to take we are taking.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON (Kerala) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am sorry that the Deputy Minister's statement, to say the least, is misleading and covers up a number of facts of the situation. As you know, she has said that the dispute has arisen regarding the AVRO planes only after the other dispute, that is the dispute about pay and other service conditions arose. It is not true. In fact, in May 1970, two pilots who were flying the AVRO planes had reported to the Operations Manager at Bombay that those planes were not behaving according to the standards laid down in the flight manual. As a result of that the Operations Manager in Bombay in May 1970, long before the so-called dispute came, had handed over a proforma of checks for all the AVROs. Those proformas were collected in August 1970 and sent to the Chief Engineer in Hyderabad but practically nothing

was done about it; and no enquiry was also made about it. Later on the DGCA appointed their topmost pilot examiner or instructors or whatever they called them, Mr. Kulkarni and Mr. Kanade. The two captains, Kulkarni and Kanade conducted certain tests and made a report but the Government and the DGCA have suppressed that report. The ICPA is asking for that report but I do not know why the DGCA and the Government are suppressing that report. Now one of the fundamental things about an aircraft, especially a two-engine aircraft is that in deciding its vulnerability, in deciding its safety, you have always to consider or imagine that one of the engines does not work.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You please put your question now.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : Because if the aircraft is below par in regard to both the engines how can you suggest that the aircraft is airworthy and that it is safe? It is very dangerous. Now, Sir . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please ask your question.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : May I ask the Government some clarifications about these things? For example why is it that the Government is not publishing the reports of Capt. Kulkarni and Capt. Kanade? Secondly, was the engine cut at decision speed, when the checks were conducted by Capt. Ashok? The Minister knows what the decision speed is. When the aircraft is already taking off in order to conduct a test, you have to throttle one of the engines and see how it behaves. May I know whether that was done?

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA (Orissa) : Is it throttle or switch-off?

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : Switch-off. Was the aircraft able to attain 35 feet at the end of the balance field length on one engine? What was the height attained by the aircraft at the end of five minutes from the time the engine developed full power?

(Interruptions)

DR. B. N. ANTANI (Gujarat) : We are concerned with the strike.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : What was the time taken and the subsequent gradient to attain 40 feet after take off? These are my questions. Another point that I want to make is this. Now, all sorts of slanders are made against the pilots, but you will note that in 1962 this House and the other House passed a Resolution congratulating and praising the pilots for their exploits in NEFA and during the conflict with Pakistan. At that time they were patriots.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The hon. Members has asked quite a few questions and before that he has said so many things and tried to give some statistical information. He should know that every aircraft in the initial stage after production and test also sometimes has got something trouble. All these things are set right and the actual operations start. In the case of 13HS-748 i.e., VT-DSQ, this operation trouble was there . . .

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : That was a new aircraft which was produced in February, 1970.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : She is replying.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Subsequently a report was made to the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and they took the services of the Rolls Royce, because here was a small engine defect. The engines are manufactured by HAL, Bangalore, in collaboration with Rolls Royce. Therefore, their services were also taken . . .

SHRI A. P. CHATTERJEE (West Bengal) : What do you mean by a small engine defect, as far as the safety of the passengers is concerned ?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The small defect that was there in the test bed of the HAL was corrected and subsequently new calibration tests were carried out. In the IAC test bed all the recalibration was also done. After all these things were done, the performance was much better. Off and on frequent information given by the pilots is being taken into consideration. Under no circumstances compromises with safety measures are being made. If there are any minor defects or certain points that are to be cleared, they are cleared. After all these things, the performance is

certainly much better. He mentioned about the flight and other things. As I have mentioned in my reply to the first question, the gradient 2.2 is nearer to the maximum gradient.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : Two of the aircraft gave only 1.4 gradient.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Subsequently they were put right. It had not gone below 1.6 at any time. One point six is the minimum and 2.5 is the maximum. That is in between the two. After these points were cleared, the performance and climbing of 14,000 ft. was done within a period of, so to say, 30 minutes. Sometimes it takes ten to twelve minutes more, but now, after these things are cleared off, it has not taken more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : What about the report of the pilots?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Which report ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Pilot Kanade's report ?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : They are not necessarily due to any defect which will affect the safety measures. They are due to certain minor things. When the aircraft is in operation some minor defect also arise. I may say for the information of the hon. House that every test is carried out at 325 hours. That test was carried out on all these aircraft. Then, a test is done at 1500 hours comprising of four sections which ultimately becomes a 6,000 hours' test. Ultimately there is another bigger and major overhaul at the end of 12,000 hours. That has not been completed as yet. All these checks are carried out at the proper time. As regards the airworthiness of these two aircraft, in the case of VT-DSO it is up to August, 1971 and the other aircraft, of which they complained, it is up to February, 1971.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : What about the report of Mr. Kulkarni and Mr. Ranadive ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : She has replied already.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : She has not replied about the report of Mr. Kulkarni.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The test pilots have subsequently tested, they have already reported, and I have already given the report of the test pilots.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Delhi) : The present dispute between the pilots and the IAC management is costing the country very dear. In its first phase when the pilots were agitating for some sort of better emoluments, there was uniform condemnation of the sense of irresponsibility shown by them. But at the present moment the immediate cause seems to be the dispute over the airworthiness of the Avros. The hon. Minister has just now stated that the Government is willing to consider, if necessary, whether the Avros are airworthy even by having them tested through an international agency. Till now this has not been done. I understand that the pilots are insisting that the airworthiness of the Avros should be assured by some international agency. I would like to know what the Government has to say in this regard particularly in the context of the statement just now made that, if need be, the Government was willing to consider it. What is the objection to having it done right now rather than postponing the issue and deferring the issue and allowing the matter to drift?

Secondly, I would like to know from the Government its own assessment as to whether this dispute over Avros' airworthiness is only an excuse to continue the earlier controversy. If it is the earlier controversy that is sought to be continued—and we would like the Government's own assessment in this regard—because the earlier controversy was absolutely unfortunate and no one would be prepared to support the pilots' case in that regard, that is, in respect of their emoluments, etc. However, one point I would like to know, in that respect, and that is, whether there was a written agreement on May 9, 1970, that certain wage increases would be given to the pilots, and that that written agreement has not been implemented. This is the specific charge made by the pilots' association. I would like to know whether this is true. If it is not true, what has the Government to say in this regard?

Finally, I would like to know about the wage structure of the pilots. Is there any disparity between the wage structure of the IAF pilots and these civilian pilots? What is it? I would like to have an

assurance from the Government that nothing would be done which would act as a sort of disincentive for the young men of our country to join the Indian Air Force. This is particularly important. Nothing should be done which would be tantamount to a disincentive for joining the Air Force.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : I am sorry the hon. Member thought perhaps that it is very necessary to bring in some foreign collaborator for testing all these things.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI : I do not suggest that; your said it.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : I said if necessary. We have not found it necessary till now. If necessary, in case it is found necessary, there may not be any hesitation on our part, but we need not go in to invite those people at this stage. All that is possible within our country with the help of aeronautical engineers and also engineers of the Department of Civil Aviation—these people are trying their best and are doing checks also in keeping the aircraft intact and making it quite up to the maximum utility in the operation. Secondly, he said in keeping with the agreement of May-1970, why not the clauses of the agreement are being adhered to. He may know that there was an offer of a package deal . . .

DR. B. N. ANTANI : The Minister has not made it clear why she made it a precondition "if necessary". Why not have them tested by an international agency right now? What is the objection? Is it a prestige issue?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : I should tell you, Sir, that it does not depend upon my thinking it necessary or his thinking it necessary. If, however, . . .

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI : May I clarify? What she said is, if things go to that extent and if it becomes necessary, we will do that, there is no need now to call international people. I do not understand that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Therefore, she says, not at this stage.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Our test pilots have fully tested them and the DGCA has also issued

the air-worthiness certificate. And that is not now; he has not issued it now. He had issued it before and the same will continue, it will continue up till August, 1971, and February, 1971. The same continues even today. And this is about these two aircraft 11 and 13.

Our technical experts and the test pilot—it is Squadron Leader Ashok, about whom I said that he is trained in foreign schools of testing—have gone into the matter. Therefore, if these people think it necessary, then we may consider that particular thing also. We may not go in immediately for that thing which is not necessary at all.

(Interruptions)

If the Members go on with a running commentary, it would be very difficult for me to answer the questions.

Secondly, about the agreement of 9th May, there were certain things that had to be complied with by the pilots and also by the management. The management had put in certain terms of productivity. In this way, certain things had to be fulfilled by the pilots on their behalf. And the management had offered a package deal to give them Rs. 725 at the highest level and that would be with retrospective effect from April, 1969. And from April, 1970 onwards, they would be getting Rs. 900 at the higher level. But this package deal was not accepted because this was accompanied by certain terms of productivity and other things which were imposed by the management also. Those discussions are still going on. In the meanwhile, this thing has arisen.

Thirdly, he says that as regards the wage structure, the Indian Air Force pilots should not have any prejudice against the young people in the country who would like to enter into the IAC, if the incentives given in Civil Aviation are more. He is right that way. The Civil Aviation pilots get more than what the pilots in the IAF get. Therefore, he is right in a way. But in spite of all these things, many of my hon. friends are fighting . . .

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI : Fighting for the IAF.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : . . . on behalf of the pilots that they should get more. Now they are getting some taxable and some non-

taxable incomes also. But it is but right that we should not give any disincentive which would prejudice the young people of our country against entering the Air Force.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI : Do I understand that the Civil Aviation pilots are getting more than the IAF.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : That is what she said.

SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) : I would like to know from the Minister what is the actual amount of loss per day that the Indian Airlines suffer as a result of this lightning strike. This is my first point.

Secondly, is it not a fact that the Indian Airlines itself has created the present situation by acceding to every unreasonable demand put forward by these pilots?

Thirdly, will the hon. Minister assure this House that all these pilots who have created the present situation by resorting to lightning strike will be dealt with according to law and that no pampering will be shown to them?

Lastly, may I know from him what stands in the way of creating a reserve pool of pilots drawn from the young unemployed pilots and giving them necessary training so that they could meet such exigencies?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The loss to the Indian Airlines on account of this Avro pilots' strike is to the tune of Rs. 2 lakhs every day; including Caravelle and other things it may come to Rs. 1 crore a week. It is Rs. 2 lakhs a day on account of the Avro pilots not taking off, and it may come to Rs. 1 crore approximately per week with the inclusion of the cancellation of the Caravelles and other things also.

Number two, whether strict measures will be taken. Yes, Sir, strict measures are being taken.

Then he asked whether this situation is not due to the management acceding to every agreement or the appeasement policy of the management. Sir, when two parties are involved, it is very difficult to say who is in the right and who is in the wrong.

[Dr. (Shrimati) Sarojini Mahishi]

Thirdly, he said about the building up of a reserve pool. As regards a reserve pool I do not know whether he means pilots sitting quietly when other pilots are working. And what guarantee is there that these pilots will also not join this non-cooperation movement? Therefore, it is very difficult and may not be very, very practical also.

SHRI MAHITOSH PURAKAYASTHA (Assam) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the Deputy Minister has admitted that there were minor defects in the Avro planes. May I know what is the harm in getting them examined by some international experts including the manufacturers in the U.K. with whose collaboration these Avro planes are built? Sir, for the safety of the passengers the pilots are mainly responsible. Is it not a fact that when an accident took place in Silchar in Assam on 29-8-70, before that accident the Indian Commercial Pilots Association represented to the Government pointing out certain defects in the navigational system in that airport. They had said that if steps were not taken then accidents might take place any moment. Only after that that accident took place. So in this matter to clear up the doubts, it is necessary that some international experts should be called in and the Avro plane should be thoroughly examined. Has not the Deputy Minister's attention been drawn to a statement of the Secretary of the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association in which he says that if the management wanted their help they would certainly respond favourably.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Conclude it by asking a question.

SHRI MAHITOSH PURAKAYASTHA : In response to that statement, has the Government taken any step to secure the co-operation of the commercial pilots? If not, may I know whether the Government will call them to a round table and discuss things with them and see that the air travellers are not put to trouble in this country? One Member has dragged in the name of Mr. Mohankumaramangalam, Chairman of the Indian Airlines.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : That is enough.

SHRI MAHITOSH PURAKAYASTHA : He is the Chairman. He is

not charged with the responsibility of day to day administration. It is the General Manager who is charged with the responsibility of day to day administration. May I know whether deterioration in the Indian Airlines administration has taken place after the present General Manager took over? Is it known to the Minister that the British Overseas Airways Corporation which had been running into loss for several years began to reap profit after the appointment of a pilot as Manager? If so, may I know what steps the Government propose to take to improve the air services in the country in consultation with the Commercial Pilots' Association?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Sir, minor defects are there. But minor defects do not mean defects which will go to create hazard to the safety of the passengers. As I made it clear, under no circumstances the Indian Airlines and the Director-General, Civil Aviation, will take the risk by compromising with airworthiness or something like that. About safety measures they are always very careful. They take the maximum precaution to see that the safety measures are complied with.

Since the hon'ble House is very keen about minor defects, I may say these are :—

- (1) poor condition of the leading edge boots on propeller plates;
- (2) droop and play in the wing flaps;
- (3) gap in the under-carriage and nacelle doors.

If these minor things are in any way connected with safety measure or safety prerequisites they were there. Of course, two of them have been set right. But that is the usual thing also. I myself was as keen as the Members of Parliament to understand these things. I went and investigated into these matters to see that these things had nothing to do with the safety measures. These things are there; sometimes they are there for a few days, but they are automatically, in the routine course, repaired and put right.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : If the aircraft does not develop full power, does it not endanger safety? What is this?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The single engine is utilised

only when it is at a lower level, i.e., below a range of 8,000 or 7,000 feet. It is only when it went beyond 8,000 feet that the twin-engine performance showed a slight deterioration and that also has been set right. I had made it quite clear in my answer to the previous question.

Secondly, the hon. Member referred to the Silchar accident. That was a different type of aircraft; it was not this aircraft. Moreover, minor repairs are always there. This may be new to Members of Parliament, but it is quite a common thing, a routine thing, to the experts and the engineering section.

Thirdly, he said that the co-operation of the pilots should be sought on the basis of understanding and negotiations and asked whether the management is willing to hold talks at the negotiating table. Sir, we have made it quite clear even in our last statement, in the House that we are always willing to negotiate with them, talk with them across the table and try to settle matters amicably.

Lastly, he mentioned about deterioration as regards services and other things. But this is not with reference to a particular person or individual. The overall responsibility rests with the management, with the Ministry and whatever measures are necessary to see that the airlines carry on their operations smoothly, are being adopted by the management.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS (Orissa): I shall ask only a very small question. It is said that at midnight yesterday there were some negotiations between the pilots and the management, particularly the Chairman of the Indian Airlines. What was the result? Secondly, I want to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that when these planes were delivered to the Indian Air Force or to the Indian Airlines, the prescribed performance regarding the climb and cruise was more than what the test pilots have shown just now. The prescribed safety standard may be a little higher than the minimum required. But my question is whether when they were delivered, their performance regarding climb and cruise was higher than what has been shown now after the test pilots have tested them. Thirdly, it is really distressing that within the last one year, we have discussed this matter perhaps four times. Sometimes it was the Avro, sometimes it was the Caravelle. There are so many

categories of employees. Sometimes the pilots resort to go-slow methods or strike; sometimes the technicians do it. I know once the unskilled workers did it, but the pilots were working, and I had to climb down from the plane without the ladder; this has been my experience. May I know from the Minister whether they will sit with the different categories of employees, the unions of different categories of employees, and conduct negotiations with them so that the matter is settled for all time to come. Otherwise, if every two months a particular section of employees go on strike or go slow, then the entire system is paralysed because it is an integrated service. For instance, if the ground people go on strike, it is no use even if the pilots work. So, will the Government hold negotiations with them so that some agreement is evolved whereby the entire country is not held to ransom every second or third month, particularly by the pilots, who have got definitely a better standard than the common citizens of the country?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The honourable Member mentioned about the cruising speed and the climb, I mean about the net performance of the aircraft at the production stage. At the production stage all these aircraft were up to the mark they were according to the standards prescribed by the international flight manual and other things. Of course, as I said earlier, there may be some teething troubles in the case of some aircraft. When a new aircraft is started, there may be new troubles, not, of course, connected with the safety measures. In one case, as I said last time, the engine developed a sort of trouble and that was set right with the help of the Rolls Royce people when they came here. Recalibration was done and everything was set right. This happened in the case of only one engine. Then, after a period of operation there may be slight defects, slight points, which have to be attended to regularly, and that is being done. I never said about anything connected with the safety measures because all the organisations connected with this light flight operation are very keen on maintaining the maximum safety measures. This must be made clear. The second point that the honourable Member raised was whether there was a meeting yesterday with the management. There was a meeting, but there was no common ground for the meeting. As regards his third point, the management is always willing to sit with the different union and try

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to negotiate with them across the table. And there should, I hope, be some understanding between the unions and the management. I hope wisdom would prevail upon the unions as well as the pilots and they would resume their duties. I think I have made the point quite clear. Once again I say the management is always willing to negotiate across the table.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : May I know from the honourable Minister whether it is not a fact that some of the South-East Asian countries were showing a great amount of interest for the purchase of Avro 748s. and whether as a result of this controversy, as a result of one of the greatest unpatriotic acts committed by the pilots as well as by both the Communist Parties of India, we shall be losing a market forever or not? If there is a controversy, nobody hereafter would show any interest in our productions in the public sector undertakings for which the Communist Friends unfortunately shout from the housetops. I would like to know whether it is not a fact. Secondly, may I know whether the Civil Aviation Ministry and, as a matter of fact, the whole Government of India, has not held the country to ransom and in their turn they have been held to ransom by the Indian Pilots Association and thereby the entire life in the country has been paralysed because of this disruption in the Indian Airlines? It has disrupted the entire normal life in the country. If so, does not the Minister feel that if there had been two or three airlines there would have been competition and the country would not have been held to ransom? In that case if this had gone on strike, there would have been the other two airlines functioning, there would have been competition, there would have been many more facilities to the travellers. The passengers would not have been waiting for eight hours at the Palam Airport to be told that a particular flight was being cancelled. I hope all these great socialists in the country would have been having the same feelings and would agree with me . . . (Interruptions) Sir, Mr. Chandra Shekhar has the same feeling . . .

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Uttar Pradesh) : Yes, but not in agreement with you.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : The third question is the Minister said about some package deal. But there is an advertisement in the *Statesman* of the 3rd December

by the Indian Commercial Pilots Association which contradicts whatever the Minister said. There was no package deal. They said there was an unconditional consent given by the Government for some increments. If that is so, I would like to know whether the Minister is right or the advertisement is right. I would like to know categorically who is right.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Of course, there was a great demand for the HS-748 aircraft in different parts of the world. About 232 HS-748 aircraft are flying in the air. Whether this discussion here or the controversy that has arisen has affected the purchase of these aircraft by the South Eastern countries, I have no information regarding this. What was his second question? The hon. Member has asked a series of questions.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : Whether it has not disrupted the entire life of the country because it is a monopoly.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : We are extremely sorry for the inconvenience and loss caused to the passengers due to the disruption of the air-services in the country.

The third question is whether matters would not have been better if there was competition. With one airline which is very large we thought that we could provide better services to the country with all the facilities. He is the best authority to say something about the other airlines. I do not wish to give the details in this matter. He is the best authority.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : What about the package deal?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Is there any contradiction by the pilots' association of your statement?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : There is no contradiction in the sense that they are asking for something else and a package deal was offered by the management upto Rs. 720/- at the highest level and that was with retrospective effect from April 1969 and it would go upto 90c from April 1970. The package deal envisaged compliance with some productivity terms by the pilots. But that was not adhered to and as a result of that the whole agreement

did not come into effect. The hon. Member referred to an advertisement. Probably he is guided by such things.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : I asked : Who is right ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He wanted to know which is right.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Whether the Minister is right or the advertisement is right? I will leave it to his wisdom.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : I will read out two lines . . .

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS : He is not sure whether the script and the publication are the same.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT (Haryana) : I would like to know whether the Rolls Royce engine defect was in that particular engine or in the whole of it and whether it was rectified. I would also like to know whether the government are thinking of making some alternative arrangements for the passengers? Thirdly, is it not a fact that the Avro has been working very well in the Madras sector and there have been no complaints? It has been giving very efficient service there and thousands of miles have been covered. I would also like to know whether the Boeing programme will in any way be affected by the non-cooperation of the pilots and their strike? Lastly in this advertisement they say, addressing the management : "You want to force the pilots to accept increased workloads ignoring the dangers involved and compromising safety". Is it not a fact that the airlines world over are having more workloads than IAC and if so whether this allegation is not wrong?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The hon. Member has asked quite a large number of questions. The engine defect was with reference to HF-748 No. 13 which was referred to by me and that was corrected. Secondly, he asked whether Avro aircraft are not flying satisfactorily in Madras side. It is true. The first aircraft was delivered in 1967 and since then they have been giving very good, accident-free service. That is why I said Defence has also been using quite a large number of Avros. We have been using them. We have

14. We have ordered for 10 more. All these have been working very well. It is recently, of course, that these people found out some snags and I think that is only a flimsy excuse for continuing their non-co-operation.

About the point whether the Boeing services would be affected on account of these things, we are making the best of our efforts to see that they will not be affected because the Caravelle pilots are sent for training and, according to the agreement of 2nd December, another batch of pilots were to go for the training and we hope to get the co-operation of the pilots in sending the second batch for training in Boeings.

As regards the work-load about which the hon. Member is very keen to know, last time when the discussions took place in this House it was made quite clear that the total number of working hours for the pilots is 65 in the Indian Airlines but, actually, they do not work even upto 65 hours. It is hardly up to 50 hours. Now with the coming in of these aircraft they may be required to do a little more service, but the 65-hour maximum limit is during the month. It comes to something like 2½ hours on an average. The total duty hours of the pilot per day are 9½ hrs and flight hours are 6½. That is the maximum. Within that only they do their duty whereas, of course, there is a slight adjustment in the package deal in terms of productivity suggesting that this should be increased—the duty hours to be increased to twelve and the flight hours to 9. The dialogue between the two should continue and I hope they would be able to agree. This work-load is lower as compared with the many other services in the world.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : Have you asked for Air Force pilots?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : It is true ; we have sought the help of the Air Force pilots.

AN HON. MEMBER : How many Avro services are there now?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Six Avros are based at Bombay, and for the six Avros based at Bombay we have sought the help of a few pilots from the Air Force. If possible

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of course, we think of getting the services
of Air India. Efforts are being made to
get their services.

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI (Uttar Pradesh) : To have a clear idea about the whole background of the trouble, may I know from the hon. Minister as to what is the amount of pay and allowances drawn by a pilot in each month in the Indian Airlines and what is the rate of allowance paid for morning and evening meals taken by a pilot on duty ? How much of all these emoluments is income tax-free ? I want just to have an idea as to why they are striking, whether they are justified or not. This would be useful.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Last time also, I think I remember, these figures were given in the House. The monthly emoluments drawn by a Caravelle pilot are Rs. 4,475 plus allowances to the tune of Rs. 2,000 which is non-taxable.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He has referred to breakfast and other allowances.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The Rs. 2,000 is tax-free. At the lower level, what is called take-home salary is Rs. 2,700 and allowances to the tune of Rs. 1,000.

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI : Is Rs. 50 paid per meal ?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Of course, there are certain other things which had to be brought on par with certain other things available in Air India. Therefore the meal allowance they are drawing is Rs. 55 per day. Then transport allowance, halting allowance and other things are about Rs. 40+20+55; then their free accommodation in a good hotel in Bombay, etc.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, it must be said to the credit of Shrimati Sarojini Mahishi that she has answered the questions as an excellent air hostess of the Treasury Benches, and that too without the pilot being in the cockpit—I mean Dr. Karan Singh. I admire her. But the trouble is . . .

श्री नेकीराम (हरियाणा) : भूपेश गुप्त जी
एयरोप्लेन में पाईलट बैठे हैं।

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : But you are a Ground Engineer.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Order, order.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Now, Sir, my only complaint is, in this connection that the charming Air Hostess has been insisting on the vegetarians having the non-vegetarian meal. That is the trouble with her because she has not really stated how the problem could be solved. The situation is extremely serious and we would like it to be amicably settled through discussion, through negotiations, by both the parties. Sir, I must make it absolutely clear that I would be very happy if not only the air pilots, but other also, take much less salary than what they are taking now. Therefore, do not think that I am a supporter of high salaries. The issue is not that; the issue is how to bring about a settlement. Now reason is required on both the sides.

Sir, is it not a fact that the management by its behaviour, has aggravated the situation, quite apart from what to the other side might be doing? Is it not also a fact that in 1964, the National Industrial Tribunal gave an award on the basis of an agreement between the management and the pilots and the award contained the agreement ? Is it not the complaint, the standing complaint of the pilots, that this agreement has not been faithfully implemented by the management ? Is it also not a fact that this year, in May last, certain oral agreement was arrived at between the pilots and the management in which the Government agreed to increase the salaries ? Whether it has been done or not, that is another point. But is there not a complaint on the part of the pilots that the agreement of May 1970 has not been fulfilled by the management or carried out by the management and that the management has evaded it ? If this is the situation and if the pilots think that the bipartite agreements between the pilots and the management are not being implemented by the management, obviously industrial relations deteriorate. That is what is happening. I should like to know, therefore, what steps the Government is going to take to settle matters. Do I understand that the invocation of the Essential Services (Maintenance) Act is going to solve the problem ? Do I understand that the suspension of the pilots is going to ease the situation ? Do I understand

that the deployment or requisition of the Air Force pilots is going to solve the problem instead of complicating the problem? I should therefore, like to know whether the management is seriously taking any step to settle the matter through mutual discussion. I do hope, Sir, that both sides will show reason. Here I was talking about the management and the Air Hostess here of the Treasury Benches is here. Therefore, I am making suggestions to you and I will make the same suggestions to the pilots also. They should also be reasonable. In fact, some of them approached me and I said, "You be reasonable". But, here I want to tell you that you are assuming a posture of threat, and you are using the Essential Services Act. . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS : No.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : No, I will tell you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Order, order, please.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : What do you say, Mr. Dharia? You please get up and say.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA (Maharashtra) : I am not blaming all the pilots. But some of them are irresponsible at least who are threatening the country and the IA services. I am here to stand by the action taken by the management.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : This irresponsibility should not be encouraged. But there may be irresponsible people in the management also.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : All right. Please put the question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I am saying that irresponsibility should not be encouraged, whether it is in the Rashtrapati Bhavan or North Block or South Block or anywhere else.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : Yes.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : But the people are made to believe by the Government, propaganda that irresponsibility is only on the side of the pilots and there is none on the side of the management. I would like to ask one question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : All right.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Therefore, I would appeal through you, Sir. That is the only thing I can do. I do not know anything about planes. Now some pilots are saying that something is wrong. I am not giving an opinion. But how are we to reject the opinion of the pilots also?

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN (Andhra Pradesh) : We are not rejecting. The experts have said that it is all right. You want a foreign collaborator to be here?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I am not asking, Mr. Akbar Ali Khan. Shri Akbar Ali Khan belongs to the Nizam, Hyderabad. He is used to horses! I am not asking him.

Sir, there should be ways and means of settling this problem. I do not think that if our planes are good, the pilots should be refusing to fly them. But this should be settled in a proper way, not by threats. Therefore, I repeat to the Government again and again to withdraw suspensions, stop the use of the Essential Services Act, start negotiations and discussions based on reason, create confidence among the pilots and the management should be ready to look into their legitimate grievances to come to an amicable settlement. I hope the pilots will also respond to such a constructive and sympathetic approach on the side of the management.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The hon. Member has tried to bring in an analogy, Sir, which I think, is not correct.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : What is incorrect? I have paid the greatest tribute. Mysore has produced aircrafts; Mysore has produced air-hostesses, Mysore has produced even Air Ministers . . . (Interruptions) . . . and Rajmata of Gwalior . . .

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Order, order.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Whether it be the award of the Tribunal or the Agreement of

[D.: (Shrimati) Sarojini Mahishi]

9th May, 1970, certain conditions were imposed by the management also which were to be fulfilled and complied with by the pilots, which they have not done, when an effort was made for a package deal. These were repeated in this House many a time. Therefore, unless both sides comply with certain terms of the agreement, there cannot be an agreement. But I wish that they would come to an agreement and the services shall be resumed soon.

Secondly, Sir, he says that the management did not comply with certain terms. Now, you would notice, Sir, that immediately after the agreement of 2nd December, the suspension of Mr. Nigam, a pilot, was withdrawn—by 'immediately' I mean, not immediately, but in the course of a day or two. But the pilots on their side did not comply with certain terms that were agreed to in that particular, agreement. Therefore, it is a matter of both the parties coming to a certain agreement. I fully share the anxiety and concern of the hon. Member in setting the whole thing right. If we take the Air Force pilots or if we take the pilots of some other Airlines, it is not a permanent solution. A permanent solution would, of course, be that these pilots work with the Air-lines and the Airlines is also interested in getting their service. In the circumstances, some permanent remedy has to be resorted to, no doubt. I think that negotiations would be carried on. Of course, strict action, disciplinary action shall have to be taken. But it does not mean that we have a closed mind for negotiations. We have an open mind for negotiations. And the taking of disciplinary action does not prevent the management from starting negotiations also.

This is for the information of the hon. Members.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Alva.

SHRI JOACHIM ALVA (Nominated) : I want to know what are the external services of the Indian Airlines, in the sense whether any foreigners are dabbling into the management affairs in Delhi, and whether any foreigners have been trying to sell any planes to us? May I know whether there is any conspiracy so that our planes may not be used by ourselves? India is able to manufacture planes by herself. The Avro is a matter

of pride to us. The foreigners or anybody else may be interested in not only that India does not make its own planes but that it cannot sell elsewhere. I want to know whether the Indian Airlines has come to know of any such thing on the part of any foreigners by which our pilots have become the victims.

Secondly, Sir, it is well known that Avro is the highest water-mark of the former Defence Minister, Mr. Krishna Menon. When we, the members of the Defence Committee, visited HAL hardly 3 weeks back the test pilots and also Air-Marshall Rikhey, who was in charge of the plane at Kanpur, told us—and so also chief test Engineer, Mr. Das and also test pilot-wing commander Chopra—that the machine was in very good order. As it is the expert opinion of these people—some of them have been trained by one of the greatest of aeronautical experts Mr. Tank—Mr. Tank was one of the great men under Hitler and he came over and trained and when our men have been trained under the best of men—why should we go round to take foreign opinion? I want to know why the IAC merely tells the pilots: 'Let them come, we shall have talks'. I want to know why they do not act like Mr. Tata. Mr. Tata, hardly a month ago, gave a very honourable invitation to the workers and pilots of Air India to go and have a talk and he had talks and the whole thing was over. There would have been a storm in the Air India but for that timely talk of Mr. Tata. There was a regular invitation given to the pilots and the problem was over. Now it does not satisfy for the Government merely to say that they are going to invite the pilots. When are you going to invite them by a formal regular letter? I want to know whether the Chairman—the public spirited man—has been able to do it. I do not agree with Mr. Lokanath Misra about Mr. Mohan Kumaramangalam. He is as good or better than all the others. The opposition is merely a Swatantra argument. Mr. Kumaramangalam was a most brilliant and patriotic young man. I want to know whether an invitation has been sent and the House will forgive me for mentioning one fact that in 1948, when I was the Sheriff in Bombay, there was the first case of Air India strike in Bombay. I sat up with the strikers till 2 in the night and got the strike withdrawn. Now it is possible by human contact to get into touch with these people and solve the problem.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : We do not see or smell anything behind our production or pride regarding the Avro. The Member asked whether we see any foreign hand. I say that we do not see anything foreign. Secondly he asked why things are not set right by negotiation. He mentioned that Air India has got a record of settling right by negotiations. The IAC has also the credit of setting the things right by negotiations. Therefore, as I told earlier, in no way are the measures that have now been taken prevent us from talking to them across the table and settling the matter.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : At the outset I must say that some irresponsible pilots are trying to take the country to ransom, and also the air services to ransom, who have brought this reputation to our tourism and also to our Indian-made plane—they deserve the strongest condemnation from all quarters in the country. Though I stand for action, that does not mean that I stand for inhuman action. To quote, Capt. Ranadive, who was suspended, that order was served on him at 1 A.M. in Ashoka Hotel and in that very order he was asked to vacate the Hotel at 1 A.M.

AN HON. MEMBER : The pilots also walked out when the passengers were waiting.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : It is not expected from the management. If the pilots behaved in an irresponsible manner, that does not mean the management should also behave in an irresponsible manner. When he resisted, that order was changed. I would appeal to the Deputy Minister that some of the officers are not giving fair treatment to such pilots who have realised that they should not behave in this way but unfortunately, because of such irresponsible behaviour from the management also, they are making them all to join the ranks. Here I would bring to the notice of the House that unfortunately because of the various defects that are brought out or alleged against the Avro planes, there is a lot of misunderstanding in the country. May I request the Minister that by making known to the whole of the country what are the international standards according to the ICAO and also according to the ARB—the UK standard—and what are the safety standards and the air-worthiness of Avro planes in this country.

It will clarify the whole issue. If there are genuine defects, the management should say, “we shall not allow that plane to fly.” Here it is not a question of any complaint from the pilots, but no sane person will allow any aircraft or any passenger to fly in that aircraft if there are defects in the aircraft. So, under these circumstances there should be that clarification and there should be the initiative from the Government or from the, management itself and they should say “No, if there are defects, we shall not fly them.” But so far it is not being said and all the time it is being said that the pilots are only making the complaints. I hope that this is not the situation. It is for the hon. Minister to clarify. Again may I know from the hon. Minister whether both the engines in the Avro are giving the same performance, or is it that one of the engines is giving good performance and the other engine is not giving good performance, because that is also one of the complaints? And as per my information it is a genuine complaint. At the same time, may I know, Sir, whether the standards, which are applied, are all international standards? When, Sir, our people, our pilots or our experts here, are also of the international standard, instead of just accepting their demand that there should be an international expert called for, will the hon. Minister clarify the point by saying, “No, our experts here are also of the international standard. Our engineers, our technicians, and the tests carried out by them are also of international standard, and there need not be any propaganda that some foreigner should be invited here for these tests.” As per my information the pilots and experts in our country are as good as they are elsewhere. So this issue should be clarified.

One last point. With regard to the dialogue in between the two, I stand for firm action against those who behave in an irresponsible way. They should be dealt with firmly and in their case no consideration whatsoever should be shown by the Government. In their case no leniency should be shown by the Government. And if the Air Force pilots are requisitioned for this service, I think the House should stand by the Government. Because of some irresponsible behaviour of some pilots we should not allow our airlines to remain idle. It should not happen. But at the same time what happens to the dialogue? I feel that

[Shri M. M. Dharia]

there are many pilots who are reasonable, those who will try to co-operate. From that point of view I feel—this is my genuine grievance—that due efforts are not being made by the high-ups in the Ministry or by the officers in the Indian Airlines. Will the hon. Minister clarify this issue also?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : The hon. Member has asked half a dozen questions in this thing. The first thing is about the management's behaviour. He said that the pilots can afford to behave in an irresponsible way but the management cannot.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : I did not say that. Mr. Deputy Chairman, I said that if the pilots misbehave, it does not mean that the management should also misbehave. I did not say it in any other manner.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : In case the pilots behave in an irresponsible way the management should not also behave in the same way. I am also of the same opinion. The management cannot afford to behave in an irresponsible way, and the management is not behaving in that manner also. If in any particular instance they have done so, if any such thing has happened, I am sorry for it. His number two question was whether the performance of this aircraft is up to the international standard. Yes, it is up to the international standard, and I gave the gradient, the speed and all the other things also. At the production stage also the aircraft is tested and it is allowed to go out of the factory after complete testing, not only at that stage, thereafter also. The test pilots, the Engineering Department of the IAC the Aeronautics Section of the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation, they all make very minute observations and they check on everything from time to time as is necessary and as is scheduled.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : Other countries are flying planes and I think there has been no complaint at all from them.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : I have told you, Sir, that 232 HS-748 are in the air. Neither was there any complaint all these three years, nor is there any complaint now about the performance of this from the

other countries also. That itself speaks volumes for the performance of the aircraft. Number three question was whether the twin engine's performance is up to the mark, as is the case with the single engine. He asked this question, Sir. Only in the case of one or two aircraft the defect was noticed and it was set right immediately, and now the performance of the twin engine and also of the single engine, as I have told you earlier, is like this. The single engine alone works to its full power up to a height of below 8,000 feet or so and then it is joined in by the twin engine, which comes into full operation then, and consequently we find that the performance of both the engines—as the recent reports, after testing, themselves have shown—is quite satisfactory and up to the international standard. The fourth question was whether our test pilots are up to the international standards and whether they are capable of giving satisfactory service and whether we need not go in for foreign expertise in this matter. We are fully confident of the capacity and the technical expertise available in our country and our test pilots are capable of giving this certificate and they have given it. But when the Members insisted then I said that if it be necessary and if it was recommended by our own expert people in that case we may think of that. The question does not arise now at this stage.

Lastly he said about the dialogue between the pilots' unions and the management.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : That you have answered many times already.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Yes, Sir. I have told on the floor of this House many times that we are always keeping an open mind to discuss and to have dialogues with these people in spite of the disciplinary action and other things that are being taken because they are to be taken but that does not mean that the dialogues have been put an end to.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I think we have had enough discussion. We need not have any more questions. To use the analogy of Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, in the absence of the pilot, the air hostess has piloted the discussion in a very competent manner.