

of Home Affairs had violated the provisions of the Joint Consultative Machinery by refusing to refer the question of Upper Division Grade Examination to Committee of Ministers following disagreement in the Departmental Council between staff and official sides;

(b) whether she gave an assurance to Members of Parliament (*vide* letter No. 421-PMO/70, dated the 21st April, 1970) that Government would have no objection to refer the question to Committee of Ministers in case of disagreement in the Departmental Council;

(c) whether no meeting of the Departmental Council has been convened since then;

(d) whether another examination has been announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Members of Parliament and the Staff Union have represented to her to cancel the examination; and

(e) if so, the action taken in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) to (e) According to the Central Secretariat Clerical Service Rules, 1962, 50% of the vacancies in the Upper Division Grade are to be filled on the basis of a Limited Departmental Competitive Examination to be held by the UPSC. The idea of holding a Limited Departmental Competitive Examination is to pick up bright youngmen in the Lower Division Grade for promotion to the Upper Division Grade. In pursuance of the Rules, the first UD Grade Limited Departmental Competitive Examination was held by the UPSC in December, 1969. The second examination, which was announced recently, is due to be held in December, 1970.

The issue of holding the said departmental examination was raised by the Staff side in the Departmental Council which met on 26th and 27th April, 1968. A disagreement was recorded. According to a convention evolved under the JCM Scheme, when there is disagreement on any non-arbitrable item, the Staff side may

request the Home Minister to take a decision in consultation with any other Minister concerned and the Labour Minister. The Staff side did not invoke this convention after the meeting of the Departmental Council till the 11th October 1968 when the concerned Unions were derecognised for their participation in the illegal strike of September, 1968. As more than a year has expired after the recording of the disagreement, the Staff side could, if they do desire, take up the matter a fresh in the Departmental Council for being processed in the normal manner.

The Federation of Central Secretariat and Allied Officers Employees was granted fresh and interim recognition early this year. A dispute has, however, arisen about the validity of the office bearers of the Federation. Two rival factions have appeared each claiming to be the representatives of the Federation. Because of this dispute, it has not yet been possible to finalise nominations on the Departmental Council from the staff side. It is for this reason that no fresh meeting of the Departmental Council could be convened so far.

Representations had been addressed by a few Members of Parliament to the Prime Minister and in reply they had been informed that Government would have no objection to referring the matter to the Committee of Ministers in case the matter is raised a fresh in the Departmental Council by the Staff side and no agreement is reached there. In the meantime, the scheme of holding the Departmental Examinations in question has to be continued as provided in the existing CSCS Rules.

CLARIFICATIONS RE. STATEMENT BY MINISTER ON INDIAN AIRLINES FOKKER FRIENDSHIP AIRCRAFT VT-DWT MISSING SINCE 29TH AUGUST, 1970.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION) : (DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI) : Mr. Chairman, before questions for clarification are put, I would like to give the House the latest position. Sir, following my statement in the

House yesterday I have since received information that the wreckage of the missing aircraft has been sighted from the air by planes of the Indian Airlines and the Air Force on the side of a hill at an altitude of approximately 5,000 feet near village Khasi Jatinga approximately 38 kilometres from Silchar and about 24 kilometres North-North-East of Kumbhirgram. The aircraft appears to be in three pieces and badly burnt. The wreckage is inaccessible by air and extremely difficult to reach even by land. A rescue party left last night by road and is expected to reach the site today. Officials of Indian Airlines, the Director General of Civil Aviation and some local officers have left for the scene of the accident by helicopter this morning. They will try to land as near the spot as possible and thereafter proceed on foot.

A court of Inquiry is being set up to enquire into causes and circumstances of this tragic accident.

It is with grief and sorrow that I must report to the House that the chances of any of the 34 passengers and 5 crew having survived the accident are considered remote. The House will share my profound sense of shock at this tragic occurrence, and join me in extending our sincere sympathy to the families of those involved in the accident.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN (Andhra Pradesh): Mr Chairman, Sir, on behalf of the House we should express our sympathies to the families of the deceased.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am sure the House joins me in expressing our sympathy to the relations of the deceased and our deep sorrow at this tragic incident.

SHRI MAHITOSH PURKAYASTHA (Assam): Sir, this is the third accident that has taken place within a span of sixteen months on Silchar-Calcutta route. The first accident took place last year and in that accident as many as forty-eight people lost their lives, and only three months back here was another accident involving a Fokker Friendship plane. In the second accident though the plane was damaged, fortunately no life was lost. Now in this third tragic incident again a Fokker

Friendship plane is involved. May I know from the honourable Minister whether the Government of India will examine the airworthiness of these Fokker Friendship planes and see whether there is something wrong with these planes? The Government should also enquire why and how this accident has taken place. Silchar, being a very difficult route, will the honourable Minister consider diverting better planes on that route? Will the Government of India also see whether the accident has got anything to do with the work-to-rule movement sponsored by the engineers and technicians of the Indian Airlines?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: Sir, it is extremely sorrowful that this accident has taken place. About the point that the honourable Member has raised, the airworthiness of the aircraft is always inspected and certified and then only the aircraft takes off. As regards the Fokker Friendship planes, these are best sold planes in the whole world. About 500 Fokker Friendship aircraft are in the air today and they are for shorter distances. The turbo-propeller aircraft is a very popular aircraft in the country. But it is sorrowful indeed that this accident has taken place. This has nothing to do with the work-to-rule strike, etc.

श्री सुन्दर सिंह भंडारी (राजस्थान) : मैं मन्त्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह विशेष प्लेन जो एक्सीडेंट में टूटा है यह पिछले दिनों में जब कर्कशाप में गया था रिपेयर के लिये और कितने दिन आउट आफ सर्विस रहा, क्या इस की जानकारी इस समय सरकार के पास है ? और दूसरे, रॉल्स रॉयस इंजन्स के बारे में उसके निर्माताओं की तरफ से यह सूचना दी गई थी कि इन इंजनों में आवश्यक परिवर्तन होना जरूरी है और अगर परिवर्तन नहीं किया गया तो इन इंजनों के बारे में ये किसी प्रकार की आश्वसित देना कठिन हो जायगा । क्या यह बात सच है कि इस प्लेन में भी रॉल्स रॉयस इंजन्स थे और उनके संबंध में वह सावधानी नहीं बरती गई ?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : This aircraft had completed 353 hours which is well within the limit prescribed for this particular engine. The suggestions made by the Rolls Royce are not applicable to this particular aircraft.

SHRI SUNDAR SINGH BHANDARI : When was it last checked ?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : After the last check, it had completed 353 hours which was well within the prescribed limit for this aircraft.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore) : From the statement it is seen that this aircraft took off from Silchar at 1436 hours for Gauhati and it lost control 1444 hours; that is, within 8 minutes of the take-off of this aircraft, it lost control. It is true that the airworthiness of the aircraft is generally tested before it is allowed to fly. I would like to know specifically whether this aircraft was tested and if so whether there is any record to show that it had airworthiness. Secondly, I would like to know whether the clearance was given with regard to the climatic conditions for this aircraft to take off. Lastly, I would also like to know about the scheme of compensation that is paid to the survivors. In view of the fact that these accidents have taken place in this particular area—this being the third accident within the last 16 months as was pointed out here—what steps would the Government take to have proper control and inspection of the whole thing ?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Then hon. Member has asked a series of questions. First of all, the airworthiness was certified by the DGCA and also by the IAC maintenance engineers and others. I would like to tell the hon. Members of this House that this aircraft was piloted by a very eminent pilot, Shri G. C. Dutt, who had completed 10,500 hours of flight and who had nearly more than 500 hours of flight in this particular type of aircraft. The co-pilot was one Shri N. V. R. Reddy who had completed 700 hours of flight. The flight engineer

was also a very capable person having the necessary service. The hon. Member asked about the amount to be given to the survivors. The amount given to each of the passengers will be Rs. 42,000, after the accident. The crew will be paid separately. The crew will be receiving different amounts. The pilot will be receiving Rs. 40,000 plus 36 times the basic pay he drew. The co-pilot will be receiving Rs. 35,000 plus 36 times the basic pay he drew. The cabin attendants will be receiving Rs. 42,000 each.

श्री मान सिंह वर्मा (उत्तर प्रदेश) : श्रीमन्, जिम क्षेत्र में यह विमानन दुर्घटना-ग्रस्त हुआ है वहां पर ...

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY . Sir, she did not answer my third question about preventive measures.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Sir, the hon. Member also put another question. This is about the preventive measures that have been taken. After the investigation was made, in previous accidents the Inquiry Committee was appointed and the findings of the Committee were given. The findings of the Committee were taken into consideration and the necessary preventive measures are taken. Preventive measures, in the case of recruitment of the pilots, in the case of their training in more vigilance and control over all these things, and the check and test, the efficiency tests—all these measures have been taken.

श्री मान सिंह वर्मा : श्रीमन्, जिम क्षेत्र में यह दुर्घटना घटी है उस क्षेत्र में नक्सलाइट्स की भी गतिविधि बढ़ी तीव्र है, तो क्या इस बात की भी आशंका है कि उनके द्वारा इस प्रकार का कोई सैनोटेड का कार्य किया गया हो ? एक बात ।

दूसरी चीज में यह जानना चाहता हूं कि यह हेलिकाप्टर तीन दिन के बाद क्यों भेजा गया ? क्या इस प्रकार की कोई सर्विस वहां नहीं रहती है । वहां पहले भी दुघनायें हो चुकी हैं, वहां हिल्स में आपरेट करने के

लिये हेलिकाप्टर रुहर समय रहने की आवश्यकता है। तो मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या वहाँ ऐसा कोई प्रबन्ध नहीं है ?

DR. (S^RIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : As far as we can see, Sir, there was no inconvenience or anything caused by the Naxalites or any of these groups. But, there was the weather and then, Sir, the terrain. The terrain there is a very difficult one as the hon. Members know. But, then there was a squall and also there were heavy storm, lightening, clouds, etc. and this must have been due to these things. Of course, it is very difficult to say at this stage. A Court of Inquiry will be appointed in this case soon. Only after the investigations are over, we can say what we should do.

श्री मान सिंह वर्मा : सेक्रेट पार्ट का जवाब नहीं दिया।

श्री ना० कृ० शंखवलकर (मध्य प्रदेश) : तीन दिन तक सोते रहे।

DR. (S^RIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : As I said, Sir, earlier, it is a very difficult terrain, it is a mountainous terrain between the Kashi Hills and the Cachar District of Assam and because there were heavy storm, lightening and heavy rainfall also, it was difficult for the helicopters of the Air Force also to find out and trace the whole thing. In some cases it has taken more time, but it was their good luck that they were able to trace it out yesterday.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN (Kerala) : Sir, even though the Fokkers have run into accidents during the last two months, it is impossible to imagine, Sir, that there could be any structural or mechanical or engine defect with our Fokkers. The hon. Minister's statement also has ruled that out. I do not think personally, Sir, that there is any possibility of sabotage. So, the only thing that remains is that this aircraft has unfortu-

nately run into very bad weather and this has happened. But, the question, Sir, is why the aircraft took off when there was such bad weather. The Press reports are that it was really bad weather. Sir, in the Assam area, about 18 months ago or so, a Fokker aircraft got into bad weather at about 7-30 A.M. and then, about 44 passengers and crew members were killed. Sir, I am not insinuating, I am not criticising; but I am only putting forward an apprehension, which I must do in the interest of the crew, in the interest of the aircraft and in the interest of the travelling passengers, that the higher-ups in the Indian Airlines do not very much appreciate that a flight is cancelled on the basis of the decision of the pilot that weather conditions are bad. That is really because—again in the interest of the Indian Airlines I shall say that there is no motive—there is so much of pressure on the aircraft that if one flight does not go, a number of flights of the Indian Airlines are not able to be operated. Therefore, Sir, I understand that the instructions given to the pilots and particularly the pilot-commanders by the Indian Airlines are that as far as possible they should fly and as far as possible they should decide in favour of flying even if the weather is bad, so that—Sir, in many cases the pilot-commanders have told me and I have the information from others also in the Indian Airlines—even if the weather is bad, the pilot decides to fly ultimately, because a number of flights of the Indian Airlines could not be operated and there would be an inquiry and somebody would say—I do not want to say who—that there are extreme reasons as to why the flight has not been operated. Therefore, Sir, I would ask the hon. Minister whether this is not the position and, if this is the position, in spite of the fact that there is difficulty with regard to operations, should not the supreme decision to fly or not at a particular moment be given to our pilot-commanders? And our pilot-commanders should be told that once they decide not to fly on account of bad weather conditions, there would be no inquiry or investigation against that decision because that alone will give them the courage to decide in favour of not flying?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Sir, I do not know where from the hon. Member has got his information that pilots are compelled to undertake certain flights under any circumstances. This is very wrong. Pilots have their own discretion. The information with regard to weather conditions is supplied by the Meteorological Department and it is up to the pilots, left to their discretion, to fly or not. But in this particular case, Mr. Dutta had covered 10,500 hours on flight and more than 500 hours on this particular type of aircraft. He was an eminent pilot and he was quite acquainted with the weather conditions of those areas and he took the decision to fly. At Silchar for a distance of about 18 to 20 miles the weather conditions were very good as indicated by the report of the Meteorological Department and there was no indication of lightening clouds or anything like that. Nearer Gauhati there was an indication of lightening clouds, storm, etc. But the distance between the two being hardly 121 miles and the flying time being hardly 35 minutes, it is very difficult to know what exactly were the reasons for the accident. We cannot exactly say what the accident was due to. It is only after the investigation is complete that we can know something about it. But I can assure the hon. Member that nobody can give instructions to the pilots compelling them to take off under any circumstances. In fact the Meteorological Department's services are so much improved that it is possible for the pilots to alter the destinations also or divert the aircraft to other direction. All these discretionary powers are vested in the pilots. I hope the hon. Member will appreciate this position.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : Sir, apart from some of the things which have been said by the hon. Members, one thing I have always felt and that is that if the machine is strong enough to rise high, these accidents can effectively be avoided. In places like Kashmir which are at a very high altitude the machines should be very strong. So I would like the hon. Minister to look into this aspect of the question and see that something is done to ensure that strong

machines are provided for such flights at high altitudes to save such situations.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Sir, all positive suggestions from Members are quite welcome. But I may give some information for the purpose of satisfying the hon. Members that the ceiling height of this aircraft is 28 thousand feet. The aircraft was flying at a distance of 7500 feet; it covered an altitude of 1000 feet per minute. Then, Sir, the highest peak in that area was 5000 feet. Under these circumstances it is a bit difficult to know how the accident took place. But all the positive suggestions from Members are welcome and I would certainly pass them on to the Technical Committee

SHRI PITAMBER DAS (Uttar Pradesh) : Sir, the hon. Member has told us about the amount of compensation that the pilot, the co-pilot and the passengers would get. I would like to know whether they would get this amount of compensation or their next of kin would get it.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Sir, the distinguished Member of this House as he is, I never thought that he would ask this question. Each *bona fide* passenger is entitled to compensation, here 'passenger' means of course the next of kin. Each passenger is entitled to Rs. 42,000 per head.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now that problem is solved.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY (Mysore) : I would like to know whether the aircraft was fitted with a radar system or not. Since the accident has taken place within eight minutes after the take-off, if it was there, was it not possible for the meteorologist to locate this storm and squalor that was prevailing at a distance of 40 miles? Then how many Fokker Friendships have met with such accidents so far and if they are not found fit for services in such areas, may I know whether they will be grounded?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : In one of the replies to a previous question I made it quite clear. It is the best sold aircraft in the world to-day. Five hundred of them are on the air. Secondly there was radar also in this aircraft. Then from 1967 onwards there were five accidents of Fokker Friendships including this one. I must say that out of them two were fatal and three were notifiable accidents—In 1966 Bhubaneswar, in 1969 Agra, in 1970 Agartala, there was of course the one at Banihal in 1966 February and this one is the second fatal accident. Therefore, as the Member would see, this is why it should not be grounded. I say that this is the most popular aircraft and they are in use. It was due to certain other accidents, certain actions and reactions or so many other factors also but only after investigation we shall be able to find it out. In the case of Khulna and also in the case of Banihal the Court of Enquiry went into all these things and the findings of the Enquiry have been looked into and necessary precautionary measures are being attended to in all these cases.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : What were the findings of the Enquiry ?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : I referred to the Courts of Enquiry in the case of Banihal and Khulna. The Pakistan Government appointed an Enquiry Committee in the case of Khulna and our accredited officers were there on the Committee and they said : 'Of course the maintenance and everything of the aircraft was quite good and only the approach control from Calcutta could have been more efficient'. They have mentioned 6 or 7 points out of which this particular thing was also there. These things are attended to.

SHRI P. C. MITRA (Bihar) : This accident occurred in the afternoon. How many flights the same plane had performed during the whole day previous to the accident ? From which place to which place and what was the time gap between the two flights ?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : Some four hours earlier from Calcutta to this place the same Captain had

taken it and therefore it was thought he was quite acquainted with the terrain and with his experience in the background it goes without saying that he was quite acquainted with this particular terrain and the mountainous area.

श्री प्रेम मनोहर (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मैं माननीय मन्त्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि अभी जो इसके पहले वहाँ एक्सीडेंट हुआ उसी स्थान पर और उसी टेरेन में यह तीसरा एक्सीडेंट है, तो मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि जो पहले दो एक्सीडेंट हुए थे, क्या उनकी रिपोर्ट आ चुकी है और यदि आ चुकी है तो क्या उस रिपोर्ट के आधार पर गनरमेंट किसी निष्कर्ष पर पहुँची। यदि सरकार किसी निष्कर्ष पर पहुँची है तो उसके लिये कोई नौमर्स बनाये हैं या नहीं ताकि इस तरह की बातें न दोहराई जायें। क्या इस चीज के बारे में सरकार ने कोई व्यवस्था की है। जो एक्सीडेंट हो चुका है, उसके बाद कम से कम इस प्रकार के नौमर्स बना लिये जाने चाहियें ताकि चौथा एक्सीडेंट उस क्षेत्र में न हो।

डा० (श्रीमती) सरोजिनी महिषी : पिछले प्रश्न के जवाब में मैंने इसका जवाब दे दिया था, ऐसा मैं समझती हूँ।

SHRI JOACHIM ALVA (Nominated) : Sir, this route to Assam has been known to be the most hazardous route in Indian aviation. Then comes Kashmir. I want to know what research the Indian Airlines have done in buying up the type of a machine which is far superior to the Fokker. The Fokker people came here in the middle of the last decade and we bought the Fokker machines. They showed their salesmanship to sell them and we were very glad to buy them up quickly. Why can't we buy the best available machines to stand up to this heaviness in weather ? About fifteen years ago I have pleaded for the cause of the wives of the two brothers, who flew in that area and

[Shri Joachim Alva]

whose planes crashed and they died in that area. They were the pilots of those planes and they were the employees of the private companies that were running the air services there at that time, and their widows did not get anything practically by way of compensation from those private companies. I also want to know whether we pay extra compensation for the pilots operating in this area. Why do you pay extra compensation when the compensation results in disaster to the planes and death of the pilots? Is it not possible for you to stop flying at all in that area or fly with proper machines so that everybody is safe in such aircraft and no extra compensation need be paid to the pilots and others? I find that there was only one steward and that a male in this unfortunate flight which resulted in a disaster. That shows that you are afraid of taking women as air hostesses in this area. Though we all admire the courage and sacrifice of women air hostesses, here the very fact that you did not take any woman air hostess, that there has been no woman air hostess in this area, shows the amount of risk involved in this line, and that is why women air hostesses are kept out in this area. In this regard I am speaking subject to correction.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : It is not correct to say, 'Sir, that women are kept out from this line on account of the risk involved. The altitude of a air flight is fixed with the help of the flights carried out by the Air Force planes and other civil aviation planes also. Now, when the altitude at which an aircraft can fly has been fixed, the height that will be achieved by the other aircraft will be far above this particular thing. Therefore, either in the case of Banihal, or in this particular case, where there is the mountainous terrain, all possible measures are taken and all possible tests are carried out before a particular aircraft is allowed to reach a particular height, and only such aircraft are allowed to go into that area. It is not correct to say that Fokker alone has met with an accident. There are the other aircraft also, there are the Dakotas and the Caravelles also which have met with accidents.

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS (Assam) : Will the hon. Minister kindly clarify whether the weather reporters gave the clearance to this aircraft before its take-off and, if so, whether the weather reports indicated the atmospheric conditions not only around Silchar but also over the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and the Cachar Hills—number one—and, number two, whether the ground engineers also gave the clearance regarding the fit condition of this aircraft before its take-off, and, number three, since we have seen that the Fokker plane has proved to be not fit for this particular area, whether the Government would consider the question of replacing Fokker planes by any better planes like the Viscounts for this area?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI : As I have said in my earlier answers, Sir, about the weather conditions, the weather report was given by the Meteorological Department and the weather conditions prevailing near Silchar for a distance of 18 to 20 miles was very good, and the weather prevailing thereafter was full of lightening clouds storm and other things also. Now, Sir, these things were not uncommon in that area. Those were not in any way different in this case from the normal conditions prevailing there during this particular period of the year. And the pilot also was very well acquainted with this type of weather and the terrain prevailing in that particular area. If there had been abnormal weather conditions, the Meteorological Department would have given the warning not to take off. Under these circumstances it was upto the discretion of the pilot to take off or not to take off. The second question was whether the ground engineers had given the clearance. The ground maintenance engineers' clearance was there for the aircraft. And the third question that he asked was about the replacement of this particular aircraft by any other. Of course, as I said earlier, all the constructive suggestions that the Members make in order to make the line safe and sound will be conveyed to the proper authorities.

SHRI R. K. PODDAR (Bihar) : All the arguments advanced are based on the bad weather in Silchar terrain. I would now

like to know that in view of the explanation that was given by the hon. Minister that the rise of the plane is about a thousand feet per minute and the highest peak being only 5,000 feet, and seeing the nature of the accident, the hon. Minister announced in her statement today that it was found in three pieces, does not this give an indication that this accident could have occurred because of a short circuit in the plane itself?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: Sir, as I said earlier, it is a bit difficult to find out what were exactly the reasons for this accident, but this is a fact that a message was received by Calcutta and then passed on to Silchar also when the pilot had reached a height of 7,500 feet. All the same, of course it is very difficult to say now whether because of going in a particular slanting direction the plane crashed like this. It is very difficult to say at this stage what it was due to.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

DR. DEBIPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA (West Bengal): Is the hon. Minister aware that some of the technicians are of the opinion—they have told me personally on the day of the accident, immediately after the accident—that the radar system in the area and the R.T. system, that is the Radio Telephone system, do not generally work very well. This is an information which is very vital to what has happened. The senior officers might not like to let it go outside but the junior technicians have told me on the very day of the accident itself—because they will be in difficulty that is why I am not disclosing their names—that these systems do not work well. Would the hon. Minister kindly enlighten the House on this aspect of the functioning of the R.T. and the Radar systems?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: There is ample scope for guessing in all these things but it is very difficult to say. As I said earlier unless the court of enquiry finds out what the

exact reasons were I do not think the Department or the Ministry can give any specific reason, they can't, it is very difficult. In the circumstances the junior engineers may do some guesswork or the senior engineers may do some guesswork but how far a particular guesswork is relevant in the circumstances it is very difficult to say. Therefore instead of allowing such guessworks to continue it is better to wait until the court of enquiry gives the report. In the case of a previous accident of this type the court of enquiry had given certain findings and prescribed certain precautionary measures and they are being attended to with all the strictness at the command of the people concerned.

DR. DEBPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA: It is not guesswork. I said something which is very important. The enquiry will look into the specific accident and give the reasons for it but the point is generally the radar system and the radio telephone system do not work. This is at a general level and the enquiry will not give out a specific answer to this point. It is not a guesswork but it is a categorical thing that I am saying which has to be given some attention.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: The suggestion will be attended to.

DR. (MRS.) MANGLADEVI TALWAR (Rajasthan): I would like to ask a small question. Is there a practice in the airlines for the passengers to insure themselves before the flight because that is the practice in most of the international flights so that when accidents occur—and they do occur sometimes even in the best of conditions—the relatives get some money?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: Insurance is not compulsory in the case of passengers on domestic flights and even in the case of flights abroad that is not compulsory but the aircraft is insured and according to the Carriage by Air Act the carrier's liability is also insured. As a result the insured amount is got by the company but at the same time compensation will be given to all the passengers on board.