

and the total ex-mill prices and the excise-duty thereon; and

(c) what are the retail prices of those goods?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI M. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The information is given in Annexures A, B and C. [See Appendix XLI, Annexure No. 22].

### CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

#### FREQUENT STRIKES BY THE EMPLOYEES OF THE AIR INDIA AND INDIAN AIRLINES CORPORATION

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL (Gujarat): Madam, with your permission, I call the attention of the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation to the frequent strikes recently by the employees of the Air India and Indian Airlines Corporation, and in particular to the current strike by the flight engineers and technicians in these two organisations, dislocating air traffic and causing inconvenience to the travelling public.

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH): Madam, it is a matter of deep regret that the Indian Aircraft Technicians Association has directed its members to go on a strike which is as contrary to the law as it is unjustified by the circumstances of the case. The Association represents more than 2000 aircraft technicians employed by the Indian Airlines Corporation and about 650 technicians employed by the Air-India. On the 9th August, the Bombay Regional Association held a meeting in the staff rest room in the workshop premises of Air India at Santa Cruz without prior permission of management. Thereupon the Air-India in a communication addressed

to the Secretary of the Regional Association, Shri F. X. Fernandes, asked him to explain why action should not be taken against him for holding the meeting without their prior permission. The Secretary submitted no explanation, nor did the Association discuss this matter with Air-India management. Instead they informed the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) that they would go on strike from 21.30 hours on the 11th August. The Assistant Labour Commissioner held discussions with the management of Air-India and with the Association separately. During these discussions Shri Fernandes informed the Assistant Labour Commissioner that he was not aware of the service rules regarding holding of such meetings and that in any case such meetings had taken place in other shops previously. The management assured the Assistant Labour Commissioner and Shri Fernandes directly that if Shri Fernandes gave an explanation on these lines no action would be taken against him. Despite this assurance the Association directed its members in both the Corporations to go on strike with effect from 21.30 hours on 11th August in view of what they alleged to be the "anti-labour" policy of Air-India management. The strike took effect accordingly, and though on the intervention of the I.A.C. management the strike of the I.A.C. employees was temporarily withdrawn, it was resumed from 21.00 hours on 13th August.

The action of the Association to go on strike is not only contrary to law as no notice of the intention to strike as required by the Industrial Disputes Act was given, but was also taken on grounds that can only be described as flimsy. If the Association really felt that a convention had developed according to which Unions were entitled to hold meetings during rest interval without the prior permission of management, the General Secretary

[Dr. Karan Singh.]

could easily have so stated in the explanation that he had been called upon to submit. It was also open to the Association, in case there was a difference of opinion with the management about the alleged convention to hold such meetings, to raise an industrial dispute and seek the machinery of the Industrial Disputes Act for a decision. It is indeed unfortunate that the Association did not choose to follow the path of law, and instead called a strike which is not only causing financial loss to both the corporations but also considerable inconvenience and harassment to the general public all over the country.

I regret the action of the Indian Aircraft Technicians Association all the more because it has followed in the train of at least two illegal strikes in the recent past in Air-India. While I assure the House that the legitimate demands of employees of all ranks will always receive earnest consideration, and that Unions and Associations of employees will have full freedom to carry on their legitimate functions, I am sure honourable members will agree that illegal strikes of the nature resorted to cannot be condoned. We owe it to the travelling public who utilize the services provided by the two Air Corporations to ensure service without constant interruptions. Strikes without exhausting all the possibilities for peacefully resolving differences should not be allowed to cause acute inconvenience to the public. I would, therefore, appeal to the Indian Aircraft Technicians Association to go back to work immediately and unconditionally, and thus avert a further worsening of an unfortunate situation which should never have arisen in the first place. However unpleasant it may be to me personally and to Government, there will be no alternative but to take action in accordance with the law and

regulations should my appeal fail to evoke the desired response.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL:

Madam, I have no desire to add to the difficulties of the management in this critical situation, but one cannot help noticing that the services of Air-India and IAC, both, are very well paid. It is a well-looked after service, with educated people employed on both sides. May I know why in such a service there seems to be a distance or curtain between the employer and employee and why do they stand on a little matter of pretige whether they can hold a meeting or not or why formal permission is not taken? Why is it that there are no cordial relations between the Secretary and the management? The Secretary of the Union can say. We want to hold a meeting. The management could agree to its holding without any written permission, in a service like that, which is a service of national importance. Besides being well-paid and looked after, why do these relations not exist? Is this the pattern of Government service all over, that such a situation has arisen? I cannot understand it. I would like the hon. Minister to clarify why we have frequent strikes in both the services when the services are looked after so well and paid so well? Besides, Air-India enjoyed a very good reputation before nationalisation. That reputation seems to be going down, particularly in foreign countries and we will be losing a lot of foreign exchange, if this sort of thing goes on. Will the Minister tell us what he proposes to do about it?

DR. KARAN SINGH: Madam, the importance of having good relations between the management and the various types of employees is certainly a matter upon which there can be no difference of opinion. It is unfortunate that comparatively petty

matters of this sort should escalate into a strike. I would just like to say one thing. In these two Air Corporations we have noticed that the disputes are not really so much between the employees and the management, but arise as a result of a certain ill-will, should we say, or a certain rivalry between different groups of employees in the two corporations and also in the same corporation. For example, in this particular strike the Indian Air Technicians Association is a breakaway part of the Air Corporation Employees Union, and they have been wanting recognition separately, and it is this that has caused a great deal of heartburning. I entirely agree with what the hon. Member has said that the continuance of this type of constant strikes is likely to adversely affect these Corporations and we are certainly going to do what we can to prevent this.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore): Madam Deputy Chairman, all is not well with the management of I.A.C. and Air India. One category or the other in both these services, one type or the other, is going on strike, causing loss to the Corporation and inconvenience to the public. I would like to know whether in view of this the Government would consider the question of appointing a Wage Board to go into the question of wage structure of the employees of all categories in Air India and I.A.C. and also into the conditions of service of these categories in both the Corporations. I would also like to know whether a Commission would be appointed to go into the working of these Corporations.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Job evaluation is going to be undertaken very shortly. We are looking for a suitable person to undertake this work, a judicial personage, and he will be given expert assessors. This job evaluation will look into the various categories of job in the two Corpora-

tions with relationship to each other and *inter se* we are hopeful that a scientific evaluation of this type will form the basis upon which fresh wage agreements can be negotiated and will give a more rational and scientific foundation to the wage structure of these two Corporations. The second point was with regard to a Commission. I do not think that a separate Commission is indicated at this stage.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra): I fully appreciate that the trade union movement in this country must be developed on healthy lines, but as we know, Madam, here in these Corporations, Air India as well as I. A. C., there are 11 trade unions, and the rivalry between the trade unions is causing this much harm and lowering the prestige of our country in the eyes of others as well as lowering the profits of these two public sector Corporations which are really doing a good service in the public sector. If you go through the press cuttings for the last six months, all these press cuttings say of the indiscipline in the I.A.C. in one way or other, of the pilot not having shown up, of the air hostesses not coming up, etc. All types of rivalries are going on in the trade unions. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is interested in really forging a very positive policy whereby some negotiating machinery should be evolved so that such occurrences do not take place always? My difficulty is the Government is not approaching this problem in the spirit and in the manner in which they ought to have done, because there is an absence of a negotiating machinery.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ask a question. Do not give explanation.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Every body is making a speech

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN It does not matter but you can be otherwise

SHRI A G KULKARNI I will co-operate as a good Member of Parliament I have suggested to the Minister on a previous occasion that some stand-by arrangement must be made In every big corporation, in every big industry, some stand-by arrangements are always made I do not understand that the stand-by arrangement is costly in such matters But looking at the huge losses and troubles caused to the travelling public, it is high time that the Minister makes some arrangements of a stand-by nature

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN That will do

DR KARAN SINGH The suggestions of the hon Member are certainly very valuable and I will take due note of them.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Very good brief reply

SHRI K CHANDRASEKHARAN (Kerala) The difficulty has arisen as the hon Minister has stated on account of disputes arising in the Air India as between the management and its employees But then I would like to ask the hon Minister (a) as to why it is that in spite of the fact that it was more or less an internal matter in Air India the services of Air India are not affected at all but a large majority of the services of the Indian Airlines Corporation have been affected during the last few days, (b) as to why steps have not been taken to see that the service organisations of the employees in the two Corporations are kept absolutely separate according to rules and regulations so that the difficulties in one Corporation would not follow the difficulties of another Corporation on

account of no fault of the other Corporation at all, (c) as to why in spite of the fact that the hon Minister has been repeatedly stating that controversies have arisen, disputes have arisen and difficulties have arisen on account of the rivalries between the two Corporations—it was even suggested by the hon Member, Mr Bhaigava as to why we should not think in terms of amalgamation of the two Corporations, I am not suggesting that the two Corporations should be amalgamated—it is a matter for serious consideration and examination but it is a matter certainly to be examined as to how these rivalries can be ended once and for all, and I would put it to the hon Minister as to whether he thinks that mere job evaluation as is being proposed to be done would end this controversy if not, keep the two Corporations absolutely separate in all respects and see that there are not controversies on account of payment of unequal wages for equal work

DR KARAN SINGH The hon Member has raised three different points. The first point is to why the I.A.C. is much more affected by the strike, whereas the dispute, such as it is, is with Air India It so happens that the number of aircraft technicians working in the I.A.C. is very much larger than that in the Air India. Therefore, it is a strange irony that although it is not really a dispute at all, because they have not raised it officially, whatever difference there is, is with Air India. While it is I.A.C. which is bearing the brunt, and this makes it even more unfortunate The second point is why the unions in both the Corporations should not be separate why there should be common unions which would affect both I do not think there is any legal provision whereby it can be enforced that the unions must be separate. I think

that it is within the competence of the workmen, if they so desire, to form a common union between the Air Corporations, and I do not think, speaking offhand, that there is anything we can do to prevent that. The third and the most important point that he made is, will job evaluation by itself solve the problems of our two Air Corporations? I entirely agree with the hon. Member that by itself job evaluation will not be able to solve the problem. We have got to look into this question in a more fundamental manner. I recently convened a special meeting of the two Boards—there is a common Board as the hon. Member knows of these two Corporations—and I put this to them, and I am myself extremely distressed and pained at the difficulties that we are having. Aviation is the industry of the future. It requires speed and dynamism. But at every step we have been crippled by strikes on flimsy grounds, and I put it to the Boards that they should look deeply into the fundamental causes behind this malaise, even the possibility of a merger of the two Corporations which the hon. Member hinted at. I said that they should also look into that and come up with some concrete proposals and suggestions whereby we can get over these constant difficulties that we have. That will be the other half, and job evaluation will be on one side. If both things are taken together, that will help us.

**SHRI BHUPENDER SINGH (Punjab):** A strike in the Indian Airlines Corporation and Air India not only causes loss of foreign exchange but also disrupts normal life within the country. The strike does not come all of a sudden. The rumblings can be heard in advance provided the Government keeps their ears to the ground. A far-sighted administration would rather catch by the horns than chase and run after the bull. May I know whether the present strike of

technicians, etc. could not be anticipated. Anticipation has nothing to do with any notice. If it could be anticipated, was any attempt made to study the issue involved and find out the solution before the strike started? As strikes are tending to be common in these airlines, does the Minister propose to do anything to ensure in future that the administrative machinery moves well before the commencement of strikes when attitudes are not very hard and the employees are in a less aggressive mood?

**DR. KARAN SINGH:** I do not think, on this particular occasion, that it was easy to anticipate that the strike would take place on a ground like this, that a meeting would be called without prior permission and that, that would escalate into a strike. I do not think it was possible to anticipate this. I think that the point that the hon. Member is making that the management must be aware of how things are developing and should keep their ears to the ground is a valid one and one can only hope that in future we will be able to get prior notice of this sort of development before it takes place.

**श्री जगत नारायण (उत्तर प्रदेश) :**

मैं वजीर साहब से यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि एयर इंडिया एयरलाइन्स कार्पोरेशन में कितने यूनियन हैं मूलाजिमी के और गवर्नमेंट ने किम किम यूनियन को रिकग्नाइज किया है, जिन् यूनियन ने अब हड़ताल की है क्या गवर्नमेंट ने उनको रिकग्नाइज किया हुआ है? मैं दूसरा सवाल यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या जगडा बिर्फ इन्डिस्ट्रियल का है, क्या स्ट्राइक करने वालों ने अपनी कोई डिमान्ड भी रखी है इन्डिस्ट्रियल के सवाल पर और अगर वह डिमान्ड रखी है तो क्या डिमान्ड है और गवर्नमेंट को क्या दिक्कत है उन डिमान्ड को पूरा करने की? यह मैं वजीर साहब से जानना चाहता हूँ।

डा० कर्ण सिंह : 11 यूनियन्स इस समय स्वाकृत है एयर कारपोरेशन में। जिस यूनियन ने इस समय स्ट्राइक की है वह एक रिकगनाइज्ड, स्वाकृत, यूनियन नहीं है। इसमें उनका जो प्रश्न है वह तो केवल इस मीटिंग के संवद में था। और भी बहुत सी बातें उन्होंने अलग अलग समय पर उठाई है, उनके ऊपर अलग विचार किया जा सकता है लेकिन वह इस स्ट्राइक से संबंधित नहीं हो सकती।

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Following an earlier convention, I have called one from every party. There are five Members from the Congress Party. I have called one. Therefore, I pass on to the next item.

#### PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

**I. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS (1965-66) OF THE HINDUSTAN CABLES LIMITED BURDWAN AND RELATED PAPERS.**

**II. THE CENTRAL BOILERS BOARD (NOMINATION OF MEMBERS) RULES, 1967.**

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI BHANU PRAKASH SINGH):** Madam Deputy Chairman, I beg to lay on the Table—

(a) A copy each of the following papers, under sub-section (1) of section 619-A of the Companies Act, 1956:

(i) Annual Report and Accounts of the Hindustan Cables Limited, Burdwan, for the year 1965-66, together with the Auditors' Report on the Accounts.

(ii) Review by Government on the working of the Company.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-1444/67 for (i) and (ii).]

(b) A copy of the Ministry of Industrial Development and Company Affairs (Department of Industrial Development) Notification G.S.R. No. 1094, dated the 7th July, 1967, publishing the Central Boilers Board (Nomination of Members) Rules, 1967, under sub-section (2) of section 28-A of the Indian Boilers Act, 1923.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-1443/67.]

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA** (West Bengal): He does not belong to the Cabinet.

**STATEMENTS SHOWING ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON ASSURANCES, PROMISES AND UNDERTAKINGS GIVEN DURING VARIOUS SESSIONS.**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL):** Madam Deputy Chairman, I beg to lay on the Table the following statements showing the action taken by Government on the various assurances, promises and undertakings given during the session shown against each:—

(i) Statement No. XII—Fifty-second Session, 1965.

(ii) Statement No. VII—Fifty-seventh Session, 1966

(iii) Statement No. VI—Fifty-eighth Session, 1966.