

[Dr. H. N. Kunzru.] if our men go, say, our pilots or others go to Prussia, even with good planes that we are likely to manufacture now, will Russia, because of our friendship for her, allow our pilots to go to her strategic areas? Again if trouble breaks out and we want more Russian planes, will not Russia be in great difficulty because of her friendship or her goodwill for India and her special relations with China? Was it wise for the Government to purchase Russian planes in these circumstances? I do not know whether it is intended to purchase more planes or not but will eight planes be sufficient for our needs? If not, more planes will be purchased. Then, did we think that a contingency might arise in which it might be embarrassing for Russia both to say 'no' to us and to supply us with the planes that we may need.

12 NOON

Next I want to deal with the question of promotion. This matter was dealt with threadbare in the other House and I certainly do not want to go into the merits of the people who have been promoted. I know some of them and I shall not charge them with want of ability or gallantry. The Chief of the General Staff whom I have known for many many years is an officer of great ability and great courage. He has had fighting experience both on the North West Frontier, that is, before partition, and in Burma during the Second World War. All these things are known to me and I know the qualifications of some of the other officers who have been promoted. I also understand the natural dissatisfaction of those who are passed over when the time for promotion comes. But what I am puzzled by is this. Why is the dissatisfaction now greater than I have ever known it to be during the last fifteen years or, I could say, even longer? There must be some reason for it. Surely, the people who are concerned are not against the present Government of India which is wholly

Indian and independent. They, certainly, are not against any individual in the Government of India. Why should they have any prejudice against anybody? Certainly, it cannot be said that they have any prejudice against the Prime Minister. And yet, although they know the procedure followed in making promotions, there is keen dissatisfaction among the officers. Again, Sir, we should like to know really and to have some knowledge as to who are the people who have been left out. Formerly, we could find out that information, before the Second World War began and for some time even during the Second World War. The Army List was published during those days and we could turn up the pages of the Army List and find out the seniority of the officers that were promoted and the number of officers whose claims were passed over. But now we have no such means of getting the information that we want. Because of our trouble with Pakistan in respect of Kashmir, the Army List is not published. I do not know what the intention of the Government on this point is. Will it be prepared to publish the Army List again even afterwards, if the trouble in Kashmir comes to an end? This is an important point to which I should like particularly to draw the attention of the Prime Minister. In the debate that took place in the other House on Defence Estimates, he said he was consulted with regard to army promotions and that he was fully responsible for the promotions that had been made. He was, of course, right in pointing out what the procedure was and his own responsibility for making promotions to very high posts in the Defence Services. But even his authority and his desire to be impartial will not be enough if the vacancies that have occurred or will soon occur in the rank of Lieutenant General are filled up in an unsatisfactory manner. The Prime Minister may shout from the house-tops that he has seen the papers and so on. Yet it will carry no conviction with anybody. I confess, I from such scraps of information that

I have on this subject—I hesitate to say anything more, because I am not sure of it—all the promotions may not be quite satisfactory and I, therefore, ask the Prime Minister particularly to look into the matter with as much care as the importance of the subject demands. I believe three or four vacancies will have to be filled up very soon and on the manner in which they are filled up will depend to no small extent the morale and contentment, of the Army.

Now, I should like to turn to the Air Force. The Defence Minister pointed out what was being done to promote the manufacture of aircraft in this country. It must have given everybody great satisfaction to know that efforts were being made to produce jet planes and planes of other kinds in this country. Perhaps, he said that a jet plane had already been produced and that it would go into action soon, though it might take some time to achieve supersonic speed. Whatever may be the limitations, I am certainly pleased to hear that efforts are being made to provide for the manufacture of planes suited to our needs. I also know, Sir, the expenditure incurred during the last two or three years by Government on strengthening the Air Force. New planes have been obtained. The size of the Force has been increased. All these are matters that will give satisfaction to those who are interested in the defence of the country. But in this matter we are not concerned entirely with the quality of the planes that we have received. We have also to compare their quality with the qualities of the planes that our neighbours have. One of our neighbours has recently obtained planes which are well known for their performance. I think I may say that they are used largely in America and have a great reputation outside America—the F. 104 planes. From what I have read about them and what I have heard about them, it seems to me that they are superior in performance to our planes. If it is so, then in spite of the expenditure incur-

red by us on the purchase of the latest aeroplanes and on strengthening our Air Force, the position cannot be regarded as satisfactory. We have to see not merely that our planes are of good quality, but also whether they can be a match for the planes of our neighbours.

In connection with our air defences, I should like to refer to the question of night defences which is a matter of great importance. Well, Government have provided for this in the same way as they have provided for the air defence of India during the day. I do not charge them with having neglected this highly important matter but here again it seems to me that our planes are inferior to the planes of our neighbours. Our night defences seem to me to be really unsatisfactory. I do not want to go into any details on this subject because obviously it is a matter that requires to be handled with care but I do ask the Defence Ministry and the Prime Minister to consider this important subject. It should not be left in the position where it is now.

Again, Sir, whatever our policy may be in regard to defence, that is, however unwilling we may be to assume the offensive in any case it has to be remembered that our neighbours have air-to-air and surface-to-air missiles. Now, these are not necessarily atomic weapons. I do not think that the missiles that Pakistan has are atomic weapons. Now, the missiles that China has may have atomic warheads but I do not think that Pakistan has been allowed by America to have atomic warheads. We should, therefore, whatever our repugnance to the use of missiles and other weapons of the same kind may be, provide for the protection of India. It has been no pleasure for us to increase expenditure on our Defence Forces within the last three years. We have increased this expenditure substantially. We have done it because it was a necessity and an urgent necessity. This too, I think, should be regarded