

[Prof. N. R. Malkani.]

the Institute two years ago. Some changes have taken place since, and I put some questions also about it last year. It is a very important, perhaps the most important and premier Institute of what is called higher technological training and research in India. If we look at the figures of expenditure, we find that the expenditure is fairly high. We find from the figures given here that we have a provision of more than Rs. 47 lakhs for recurring expenditure and more than Rs. 59 lakhs for non-recurring expenditure making a total of more than Rs. 106 lakhs, *i.e.*, more than a crore of expenditure, in a year, half of it recurring and half of it non-recurring. I also recently visited the Institute of Science, Bangalore. As far as I know, their estimated expenditure this year is only Rs. 21 lakhs and, as far as I know, their teaching is in no way inferior; if at all, it is superior to that of the Institute at Kharagpur.

Sir, last year when I put a question, I was told that there were only two Post-Graduate courses at Kharagpur— one was Chemical Engineering with 7 pupils, and another Mechanical Handling of Materials with 5 pupils only, or in all 12 for Post-Graduate studies. On the other hand there were 1,123 Under-Graduates in that Institute.

DR. MONO MOHAN DAS: Last year?

PROF. N. R. MALKANI: Here is your report for 1955-56. On page 32 you mention 1123 Under-Graduates but 82 Post-Graduates. Last year I was told there were only 12 Post-Graduate students. Now there are 82. Last year there were only two. Post-Graduate courses and this year we are told that there are 21 additional courses. To me it appears that this addition is rather haphazard and too hasty. It should have been properly phased. Last year there were only 2 and now we have 21 more. But I would like to know how many Post-Graduate students are there in these 21 sections started in one year, last year I was promised in an answer that more

were being started, but, in this haphazard manner, 21 courses have been started. I would like to know how many pupils per course have been recruited at the present moment. Sir, it appears to me that this institute is one in a chain of institutions for higher technological training. I find however that this is a central institute. It should not mainly be an institution for the < training of under-graduates. They could be trained in any other University, in any other college, and the staff here is very highly paid, is very highly technically qualified, is an expert staff. I do not see any reason why Kharagpur should be like an ordinary college coaching students for ordinary courses of Under-Graduates. It was intended to be for Post-Graduate students. Sir, when I visited Bangalore I was told that in almost every section there were a few Post-Graduate students, a few students for research. I am not aware that there is a single research student in any of these sections at Kharagpur Sir, there are some post-graduate students, but I am not aware of any research students there. But there are research students in Bangalore, Sir, I am told also that the prestige and the position of the- Bangalore Institute is much higher than that of the Kharagpur Institute though the Kharagpur Institute, is very well endowed, and its finances are very ample, if not lavish. But its output, to my mind, is not up to the mark.

Then, Sir, another thing to which I must draw your attention is this.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: How long are you likely to take?

PROF. N. R. MALKANI : Five minutes more, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will give you five minutes more later. Mr. Alagesan is going to make a statement now.

STATEMENT ON RAILWAY ACCIDENT BETWEEN JAD- CHERLA AND MAHABUBNA-GAR

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR
RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V.
ALAGESAN): It is with

deep distress and anguish that I rise to make this statement to apprise the House of the particulars regarding the accident to the ill-fated 565-Down Secunderabad-Dronachalam Passenger train which met with a disaster in the early hours of the 2nd of September. The tragedy is heightened when we remember that a similar disaster overtook us at Jangaon near about Hyderabad barely two years ago. The present one following on the heels of the last in the same area has completely overwhelmed us. The heavy toll of human life that has been taken is staggering.

The accident occurred while the train was on the run between Jadcherla and Mahbubnagar stations on the single line metre gauge section of the Secunderabad Division of the Central Railway.

At about 0.45 hours after the engine had just passed the 20-foot span girder bridge at mile 66/15-16 between Jadcherla and Mahbubnagar, the tender of the engine and the next two third-class bogie coaches fell down the bridge and were completely smashed.

It had been raining in the area and it is reported that a tank near a village by the name of Pochani Kumta, about 11 miles from and within the catchment area of the bridge, had burst resulting in an excessive rush of water towards the bridge. The bridge gave way during the passage of the train.

Due to the rainy weather, the track, including the bridge, was being patrolled.

This bridge had been last inspected on the 2nd of August 1956 by the Divisional and Assistant Engineers and the Permanent Way Inspector and declared safe.

The train left Jadcherla station at 0 • 24 hours. The previous train No. 805 Dn. Goods which passed over the bridge safely left Jadcherla at 20.30 hours and arrived Mahbubnagar at 21.10 hours on the first of September, *i.e.*, roughly 3 hours 45 minutes prior to the accident. The maximum per-

missible speed on the section is 40 miles per hour.

So far 112 dead bodies have been recovered by the Police, including 24 at site and the remaining downstream. The search is continuing. A special train left with the dead bodies yesterday evening for Kacheguda for identification and further disposal by the Police.

The number of injured was 34, including 5 with serious, 14 with minor and 15 with trivial injuries. Six were sent to the Lallaguda hospital and four to the Mahbubnagar Civil hospital. They are reported to be progressing satisfactorily. The 24, who did not go to the hospital were allowed to proceed onwards after having been given medical attention at site.

I would like to express our heartfelt sympathies to the families of those that have lost their lives and to the injured. By this time the Minister of Railways and Transport and the Chairman of the Railway Board should be already on the spot.

All the necessary measures are being taken to attend to the injured. The first relief train, with medical van and Divisional Officers two Assistant Surgeons and two Nurses left Secunderabad at about 4.05 hours and arrived at the site at about 6-49 hours. Another relief train with further staff and 20 Osmania University Medical students followed and arrived at the site at about 12.30 hrs. Three Civil doctors from Mahbubnagar and ten from Secunderabad also came to the assistance of the injured.

Arrangements had been made for supply of refreshments to the passengers at the spot. They were ultimately transported to Mahbubnagar by the Hyderabad State Buses.

An Enquiry Office has also been opened in the Secunderabad Divisional Office to furnish necessary information to the public.

The General Manager of Central Railway accompanied by the Heads

[Shri O. V. Alagesan.]

of Departments concerned including the Chief Medical Officer and the Deputy Chief Engineer, Bridges, left Bombay by a special plane to Secun-derabad and reached the site at about 13.45 hours yesterday. The Collector and Civil Surgeon and Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mahbubnagar also arrived. The Chief Minister of Hyderabad accompanied by some other Ministers of the State also visited the scene.

The Government Inspector of Railways will commence his statutory enquiry on the 4th of September and the causes leading to the accident will be known on completion of the enquiry. The question of settlement of claims for compensation is receiving immediate attention.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE (Hyderabad): Sir, I had raised the question wanting to know whether the bridge had been damaged and whether any proper precautions were taken, and also whether there was a warning given that the bridge was not safe and as such the trains should not go over it.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Sir, I would like to await further information in order to be very specific about these details. After sufficient information is received, I have no objection to place all such information before the House.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE:- Has the hon. Minister seen the newspapers this morning wherein three Members of Parliament have issued a statement to the effect that the bridge was damaged about a month ago and that it was repaired? May we know, Sir, whether that repair was properly done, and also whether the train had passed over it, in spite of the fact that a warning had been given that the train should not go over it?

DR. R. B. GOUR (Hyderabad): Even the chain was pulled to stop the train!

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Sir, at present I am not in a position either to confirm or to controvert what has

been said. As I have already said, I should like to await some further information before any definite statement can be made with regard to all these occurrences.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Sir, recently a question was asked with regard to the Jangaon incident, and the answer given by the hon. Minister was that the proper inspection of all the bridges had taken place and that there was no danger from any of the bridges in the Hyderabad State. This also happens to be more or less at the same mileage on the South as Jangaon is on the North, in the Hyderabad State.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND (Hyderabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister's statement that the matter is being enquired into does not satisfy the House. A similar answer was given to us last year, and the hon. Members pointed out that there was some sort of natural defect with regard to the bridges round about the Hyderabad city. The hon. Minister knows perfectly well that the Nizam State Railway was purchased by the Hyderabad Government in 1930 from a British company, and that British company, knowing full well that the State was going to take over the Railway, did not do any repairing work for the previous ten years. That means, Sir, that these bridges in the Hyderabad State have not been repaired since 1920. The hon. Minister knows that this bridge is only a single-arch bridge and there are no piers. The hon. Minister's attention had also been drawn to the fact that these bridges had used lime-mortar which was not strong enough, and it had been suggested that immediate steps should be taken for cement-grouting. In spite of all these suggestions, Sir, no step seems to have been taken in the matter. Only an enquiry is being made with the object of whitewashing the Government servants. Since there is such a grave default on the part of the Government, I think there should be an enquiry with which the Members of Parliament should be associated, and they should go into the matter in detail and find out what steps have actually been taken.

Sir, the headquarters of the Central Railway are now located at Bombay, which is very far from Hyderabad, and even for minor repairs permission has to be obtained from Bombay. Therefore I submit, that when it is a question of life and death of so many people and the safety of the Railways in our country, immediate steps should be taken to see that all the bridges in the Hyderabad State are carefully examined by independent civil engineers, not belonging to the Railway Ministry, but absolutely independent. They should study the problem and apply certain specific tests to these bridges, and only after necessary precautions have been taken, we should permit the use of these bridges. I feel, Sir, that any kind of assurance from the hon. Minister should not be accepted by this House. Some concrete steps should be taken by the Government.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Sir, we cannot be satisfied with only the assurance that the hon. Minister has given. Our past experience is there. Government being wise after the event does not bring back the lives of the unfortunate people who have died. I fully support the suggestion for an enquiry put forward by Mr. Kishen Chand.

DR. R. B. GOUR: The Jangaon accident also was in the Telangana area. The tanks in the Telangana area are in a very bad condition and serious breaches have occurred, even though the rivulets are very small in Hyderabad. Before the N.S.R. was taken over, the practice was that the P.W.D. of the State used to inspect these tanks before the beginning of the rainy season. The hon. Minister says that the bridges were examined by the railway engineers in the month of August, but were the tanks examined, particularly the tanks the breach of which has resulted in this disaster and similarly the Jangaon accident also?

SHRI RAGHAVENDRARAO (Hyderabad): May I know how many times such tragedies had occurred before the reorganisation of the railways, *i.e.*, the transfer of the headquarters from Hyderabad to Bombay?

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar): In view of the observations made by hon. Members, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he would agree to immediately issue instructions to restrict to the minimum the speed limits on the Hyderabad railways bridges till a proper enquiry has been made and the administration is satisfied that they are in a proper condition and can take the regular speeds?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: May I say a few words? Generally when very serious accidents occur, there is a machinery by which these accidents are being enquired into. There is provision for it in the statute itself. Statutory enquiries are conducted, causes analysed and then action taken. Now in this case as well as in the very serious accident that occurred two years ago, there is no doubt that the entire country will share the concern and anxiety that has been expressed by the hon. Members of this House. Only a few minutes back the Prime Minister, speaking in the other House, said that we would have to await certain more information, certain more data, before it can be further looked into. We have not closed our minds to an enquiry apart from the statutory enquiry. We can have such an enquiry—it may be a judicial enquiry—and a demand was made that hon. Members of Parliament should be associated with that enquiry. This can be gone into. We have not closed our minds. As I said in my statement, the hon. Minister for Railways is already on the spot, and we will await his return here. Then after obtaining more information, the question whether an enquiry, even a judicial enquiry apart from the statutory enquiry which is provided for, should be held can be taken up and decided. We are perfectly willing to reconsider the whole matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All that the hon. Members are interested in is increasing the safety of railway travel and restoring public confidence.