

INAUGURAL ADDRESS
SIXTH ANNUAL AERO-MEDICAL SOCIETY MEETING,
VIGYAN BHAWAN 21 FEB. '59

SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON
Minister of Defence

Mr. President, Chief of the Air Staff, Professor Haldane, Mr. Defence Secretary and friends:

I am very happy to be here, for the second time, at the Annual Meeting of the Aero-Medical Society and to be with so many members of the Defence Services, including our Director General, leading scientists and Air Force officers (in fact, I have never seen such a large collection of Air Force officers anywhere else) to do, what the President calls, the 'Inauguration' of this Meeting.

I am here largely, first of all, to express my appreciation of the initiative taken by officers of the Air Force and of the Medical officers of the Defence Services who are now on the aviation side in their efforts to set up this organisation or this approach to problems that have arisen in the course of their experience. It is not, as though some said that we must have a School of Aviation Medicine because somebody else has got it, but because your everyday experience necessitated some research into this matter.

The Public and Government have been concerned with accidents that take place now and then, though we know that the rate in this country is no higher than anywhere else. But from all the reports we have, only a few of them have been due to the mechanical error of the machine. If your enquiry and the work that you do assist in the correction of human error, it would be a great contribution to Aviation. The attempts that we can make towards making flying safer, towards making the pilot more efficient for the purpose he is intended, are part of your duties.

I am, therefore, glad that this effort started from within, on your own initiative, five or six years ago has now become part of the general organisation—I mean Governmental organisation and the arrangement of the Air Force. I am happy that the Chief of the Air Staff has given you all support.

I have, therefore, come here very largely to convey the feeling that Governmental sympathies extend to this movement.

You have been able to set up a School of Aviation Medicine and there is also a cell in the Technical Development Establishment working in this way. The Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services, is discussing with us the possibilities of scientific developments in the research institutions at Poona. I hope, Mr. President, that your School will be in touch with the School of Mountaineering and the Atomic Energy Establishment in Bombay and other places where related subjects and matters relevant to your own investigations form the subject of study. The number of medical men in

our Air Force is yet small. Not only are there problems to be investigated to make flying safer and to find safety measures, but I hope that in the course of your investigations, you may also find out whether aviation has any therapeutic value in other ways.

The School of Aviation Medicine is no longer an experiment. It has been established, and the presence of the Deputy Minister and myself here as also of the Defence Secretary and other officers is an indication that the Defence Ministry and Government as a whole will support or rather give their blessings to your efforts.

I do hope that the presence of Dr. Kothari here is an indication to you not merely of the interest that he personally takes or of the relation that is possible between the Technical Development Establishments and the Aero-Medical Society but also of the public being informed of the new place that Science has taken in the Defence Services.
