

LOK SABHA

—
Wednesday, March 27, 1968/Chaitra 7,
1890 (Saka).

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

एशिया प्रतिष्ठान

*868. श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : क्या
बैदेशिक-कार्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा
करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार ने एशिया प्रतिष्ठान
की गतिविधियों को भारत में समाप्त कर
देने के आदेश जारी किये हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण
हैं;

(ग) क्या यह सच है कि भारत में
उपरोक्त प्रतिष्ठान के प्रतिनिधि श्री रिचर्ड
जी० हेगी ने कहा है कि 'हमें आशा है कि
भविष्य में यह आदेश रद्द कर दिया जायेगा';
और

(घ) यदि हां, तो इस पर सरकार
की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है ?

बैदेशिक-कार्य मंत्रालय में राज्य-मंत्री
(श्री ब० रा० भगत) : (क) जी हां ।

(ख) क्योंकि एशिया फाउंडेशन को
कुछ धन संदेहास्पद स्रोतों से मिलता था
और ऐसी कोई गारंटी नहीं है कि यह भविष्य
में ऐसा नहीं करेगी ।

(ग) प्रेस में इस आशय की एक
रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित हुई थी कि श्री रिचर्ड जी०
हेगी ने यह कहा है कि एशिया फाउंडेशन
को 'यह उम्मीद है कि इस निर्णय को भविष्य
में किसी समय भी बदल दिया जाएगा' ।

(घ) श्री हेगी का कथित वक्तव्य उनकी
आशा की अभिव्यक्ति मात्र ही है और इससे
सरकार के निर्णय पर कोई असर नहीं पड़ता ।

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, Shri Ram-
avatar Shastri is not present in the
House.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry. Now,
next question.

SHRI UMANATH: The question
having been answered you may per-
mit supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: Next question.

SHRI UMANATH: I am not raising
any point of order. It is serious point,
The question having been answered,
whether rightly or wrongly, you may
permit some supplementary questions.

MR. SPEAKER: I have not allow-
ed it. I have called the next ques-
tion already.

Cars sold by Foreign Service Officials

*869. SHRI BAL RAJ MADHOK:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS be pleased to state the rea-
sons for cars brought by foreign ser-
vice officials being allowed to be sold
by them on their own and not through
State Trading Corporation on the
same terms on which the cars of the
foreign service officials of other coun-
tries are purchased and sold by State
Trading Corporation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT): In the matter of the sale of personal cars, a comparison cannot be drawn between Indian Foreign Service Officers and foreign diplomats in India. Foreign diplomats import their cars duty free, while our Foreign Service Officers, with the exception of Heads of Missions, pay customs duty. However, excluding a Head of Mission, the Foreign Service Officer, who desires to sell his car within the period stipulated in the Import Licence is required to offer it to the State Trading Corporation.

SHRI BAL RAJ MADHOK: It is not purely a question of the technical validity of their selling their cars. The diplomatic services are supposed to represent the country outside and set a standard of behaviour worthy of our country and also present a sense of mission. But as things are many of the people belonging to the diplomatic services—there are some good exceptions also—only make use of their position to make gains by such ways. Though technically they may not be wrong, it creates an impression that they are going abroad, purchasing things there and selling them here at higher prices. That is why they are keen to go to particular stations. This casts some kind of reflection on the diplomatic services and also affects their efficiency. May I know whether some checks will be put on their purchasing things and selling them in the market here in India?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: There are certain restrictions and rules governing the sale of cars when the heads of the missions come back. The Finance Ministry also goes into this. Actually, the Finance Ministry has answered a few questions on this matter regarding the rules governing this. But the general rules are that they have to give an undertaking that they will not sell the car for three years from the date of importation or four years from the date of purchase, and if they sell or want to sell the car before that period,

they have to take the permission of Government before doing so.

SHRI BAL RAJ MADHOK: Because of these perquisites, many of the diplomats try to get posted in such capitals where things can be purchased at cheap prices, and they avoid being posted in many other countries, such as African and Asian countries which from the point of view of India's external interests are much more important. In a way, these perquisites serve as a temptation. Keeping this in mind, may I know whether the senior diplomats will be posted to those countries which may not be so important otherwise but which are important from the point of view of India's interests?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: The place of posting or the country of posting has not much relevance to this, because wherever they are posted they have the same facilities and they can buy cars free of duty. For posting purposes, we have different categories and different sectors in the world. We take into consideration their suitability, the places where they have been posted earlier and then decide to which place they are to be posted. So, all these things are considered.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: The hon. Minister has said that if the officials have to sell the cars before the time fixed, permission has to be taken. May I know in how many cases such permissions have been given?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: Persons belonging to these Missions other than the heads of missions can sell only to the STC. The only relaxation is in favour of the heads of missions. During the last five years, there have been 32 such cases where they have sold their cars.

SHRI DINKAR DESAI: May I know the total number of cars that were imported by these officials during the last five years

MR: SPEAKER: That is what he has just mentioned.

SHRI DINKAR DESAI: He has given the number sold. But I want information about the number of cars that were imported by these officials during the last five years.

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: Out of these 17 cases are of the heads of missions. In other cases, normally, anybody who goes abroad buys a car. The House is well aware that if a person sells a car in foreign countries, say, in Europe or America, even after six months of its purchase, the re-sale value is very little. Therefore, normally, they all import the car....

SHRI DINKAR DESAI: What is the number imported?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: It is very difficult to give the information because I do not have that information now. But as I have said, anybody who buys a car abroad brings it here, because the re-sale value in the foreign countries is not much. But as I said, if they sell it here they sell it only to the STC. In the case of the heads of missions, there is a certain relaxation.

SHRI HEM BARUA: Is it not a fact—I want to pinpoint it—that Mr. Azim Hussain, one of our most outstanding diplomats has sold his imported car not through the STC but to a man directly at Rs. 80,000 and given him a receipt for Rs. 30,000 only and if so, whether Government have received any complaint about it—there is a complaint about it—and if so, whether they are going to inquire into the conduct of this diplomat?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: Mr. Azim Hussain bought a Fiat-2300. It is not a luxury car by any standard. He bought it for Rs. 10271 and he bought it in 1964; he sold it in December, 1967. He was posted outside, and on transfer he has sold it. Therefore this is a perfectly regular case, and there is nothing irregular about it.

श्री क० न० सिबारी : गवर्नमेंट ने इकानोमी के मेजर के रूप में यह डिस्टाइड किया था कि भारत सरकार छोटी कारों का इस्तेमाल करेगी। क्या सरकार इस निर्णय को दृष्टि में रखते हुए इस बात पर विचार कर रही है कि जो बड़ी कारें खरीदी जा रही हैं उन्हें दूसरों को बेच दिया जाये और गवर्नमेंट के मिनिस्टर तथा आफिसर उन्हें यूज न करें ?

श्री ब० रा० भगत : जिन गाड़ियों का विक्र हो रहा है, वे सरकारी गाड़ियाँ नहीं हैं। वे उन अधिकारियों की अपनी गाड़ियाँ हैं जो वे अपने पैसों से खरीदते हैं।

श्री प्रदल बिहारी बाजपेयी : मन्त्री महोदय ने जो उत्तर दिया है उससे ऐसा लगता है कि हमारे मिशनर के प्रमुखों, हैड्ज, के बारे में अलग नियम है और बाकी राजनयिकों के बारे में अलग नियम है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि ये अलग अलग नियम बनाने का क्या कारण है और क्या सब के लिए समान नियम नहीं बनाए जा सकते हैं।

श्री ब० रा० भगत : हमारे मिशनरों के जो प्रमुख हैं, चूँकि वे राष्ट्रपति के रिप्रेजेन्टेटिव हैं और बहुत बड़े ओहदे के अधिकारी हैं इस लिए उन को इतनी छूट जरूर है कि वे अपनी कारों को तीन साल के बाद बेच सकते हैं और उन पर ड्यूटी नहीं लगती है।

श्री कंवर लाल गुप्त : क्यों ?

श्री ब० रा० भगत : जैसा कि मैंने बताया है, इस लिए कि वे बड़े उच्चाधिकारी हैं। दुनिया में हैड्ज आफ मिशनर जो जो छूट और अधिकार मिले हुए हैं, वे उसी स्तर पर हैं। हम यह कोई नई बात नहीं कर रहे हैं। मिशनर में काम करने वाले

जो दूसरे अधिकारी हैं, ग्राम तौर से एक मामूली नागरिक को जो छूट है, वही छूट उन को भी है। वे पांच साल की अवधि में अपनी कार नहीं बेच सकते हैं, जब कि ग्राम नागरिक सात साल की अवधि में नहीं बेच सकते हैं। ग्राम नागरिक किसी भी कीमत की कार ला सकते हैं, जब कि मिशन में काम करने वाले अधिकारी एक हजार पाँच से ज्यादा की कार नहीं ला सकते हैं। अगर दोनों को मिला देंगे, तो कोई ज्यादा अन्तर नहीं होगा।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : अगर ज्यादा अन्तर नहीं है, तो मिला दीजिए।

SHRI SHANTILAL SHAH: Would it not be proper that the STC should take over the cars at cost minus depreciation for the years of use so that there will be no loss to the officer but the officers would not take any profit out of it? Would that be possible?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: As I have said, a large number of people belonging to these missions sell the cars to the STC if they want to sell them. After they sell the cars, they have also to buy new cars when they go abroad on further posting, for which they have to pay.

SHRI HEM BARUA: But they buy and sell at an exorbitant price.

Indian Embassy in Washington

*870. SHRI HEM BARUA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to an article entitled 'A bit of Central Secretariat' published in the Hindustan Times, dated the 28th February, 1968 which presents a report on the working of our Embassy in Washington; and

(b) whether Government have examined the report and if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT): (a) and (b). Government have issued instructions to all Indian Missions abroad in the matter of enforcing the highest standards of courtesy and efficiency.

So far as this particular article is concerned, Government have seen it. They are making enquiries from the Embassy.

SHRI HEM BARUA: This article, published in the Hindustan Times of 28 February and written by Shri Krishan Bhatia, has pinpointed the working of our embassy in Washington. It is the same indifference, same lethargy, same indolence, same casual and cavalier manner seen in the Secretariat here, and there are about 300 persons working on the staff of the Indian embassy in Washington. In the context of all this, may I know what particular steps our Government have taken to see that the functioning of our embassies abroad, particularly because they are supposed to project the image of India, is improved and they do not represent a bit of the Central Secretariat in Delhi in foreign countries?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: This is a continuous matter. In recruiting, training and in posting abroad, we give them sufficient training. Whether it is a matter of courtesy or efficiency, this is one of the primary things kept in view. The House has several times discussed this matter and it is our effort to see that there should be continuing effort in this direction so that our embassies abroad function efficiently and show all due courtesy that is expected of them.

SHRI HEM BARUA: The hon. Minister has said that it is the attempt or effort of Government to see that our embassies abroad function efficiently. Is it not a fact that our Ambassador in Algiers, Shri Mohammed Yunus, who had joined his post only three or four months ago, flew down