

अध्यक्ष महोदय : नैक्स्ट क्वेश्चन । श्री हंसदा ।

श्री म० ला० दिवेदी : मेरे मवाल का उत्तर नहीं मिला है ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैंने खुद कहा है कि उत्तर न दिया जाये ।

डा० गोबिंद दास : अध्यक्ष महोदय, एक जरूरी सवाल पूछना है ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मेरी तयकिसमती है कि मैं अगले सवाल पर चला गया हूँ ।

Manufacture of Helicopters

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- *218. { **Shri Subodh Hansda:**
Shri Basumatari:
Shri S. C. Samanta:
Shri G. K. Singha:
Shri Bhakt Darshan:
Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad:
Shri D. C. Sharma:

Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an agreement has been signed with a French firm to manufacture Helicopters in India at Kanpur and Bangalore;

(b) if so, the terms of the contracts;

(c) whether all components of the Helicopters will be manufactured or only the spare parts; and

(d) how long it will take to manufacture the entire engine and its components?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence (Shri Raghuramalah):

(a) An agreement has been signed with a French firm for the manufacture in India of this helicopter. The engine for this helicopter is manufactured by a different firm and the above agreement excludes the manufacture of the engine.

(b) It will not be in the public interest to disclose the details of the terms of the contract; it may however, be stated that we shall be paying only a reasonable licence fee on convenient terms of payment. There will be no payment on account of royalties.

(c) All components of the helicopter and not only spare parts will be taken up progressively for manufacture in India.

(d) Negotiations are in progress for the conclusion of an agreement to manufacture the engine in India.

Shri Hem Barua: This is not a defence matter. I want to raise a point of order. They are going to manufacture helicopters in this country. There has been so much of work on this matter. Is it that the terms cannot be disclosed in public interest? I cannot understand this. The agreement is entered into; the manufacture would follow the pattern of that agreement and everything else. But the Government would not disclose the details.

Mr. Speaker: He has disclosed as much as he thought he could possibly do. But, other details, he says, it is not in public interest to give further. He has given some facts. But if the hon. Member puts in any question and the answer is denied I can see whether I can interfere.

The Minister of Defence (Shri Krishna Menon): Probably, the hon. Member wants to know all the details that are given in the agreement. I think the Government also has got some responsibilities in this matter; the agreement contains the quantum and the rate of production and the rate of Indianisation and the various other restrictive clauses. That is one point. Secondly, it is concluded with a foreign firm which is usually tied up with the Government of that country and if these things are discussed in this way, then it makes it impossible to obtain favourable terms;

because of the economic condition of our country we may pay lower prices if the details are not publicised. I am quite prepared to place this contract for your inspection and if these facts do not convince you, I shall abide by your ruling.... (Interruptions).

Shri Hem Barua: He should place it before you for your inspection and satisfaction as he has promised.

Mr. Speaker: If I need that I will request him to do that.

श्री भक्त दर्शन : अध्यक्ष महोदय , जब पब्लिक इन्स्ट्रुमेंट का सवाल आ गया है, तो पूरक प्रश्न पूछने की गुंजायश कहाँ रह गई है ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : जब तक मुझे सप्लीमेंटरी क्वेश्चन का पता न हो, तब तक मैं कैसे कह सकता हूँ कि उस की गुंजायश है या नहीं ।

Shri Subodh Hansda: May I know the number of helicopters to be manufactured with the aid of the French firm, and also whether the spare parts will be manufactured by the French firm in their own country or here?

Shri Krishna Menon: The numbers cannot be given because that is giving the size of the equipment. With regard to the manufacture of spare parts, everything is to be manufactured in this country progressively.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: I want to know whether the helicopters that are likely to be produced by these firms are already....

Shri Hem Barua: Sir, on a point of order. Here is an agreement with the French firm for the manufacture of helicopters here. They know the number of helicopters to be manufactured.

Mr. Speaker: They may certainly know.

Shri Hem Barua: Then the whole world knows the price and the number of helicopters.

Mr. Speaker: Unless I decide that it is not for the Minister to have that privilege. The hon. Members need not go on hammering the same point. It is the same thing. It is not in public interest to disclose the numbers, he has said so. The information is known only to the hon. Minister; how far he should disclose it is a matter for him. I cannot interfere in every case. I will give him the privilege to disclose as much as he thinks fit, taking the public interest into consideration. In rare circumstances, where I come to the conclusion that something is being concealed from the House and that the information ought to be given, I would certainly interfere. Otherwise I will give that option to the hon. Minister, the option or privilege of public interest.

Shri Hem Barua: May I submit, with all humility that the point I raised has not been answered. I was saying that the French firm might disclose the number of helicopters and the whole world might know it before we knew anything about it.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: The French firm knows what the terms of the agreement are; then why not ask that the agreement be laid on the Table!.... (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: Is it not an agreement between the French firm and our Government?

Shri Krishna Menon: Yes, Sir. Our Government is on one side. But all these agreements in regard to armaments, even though they come from the French firm, have the approval of that Government: there is a Government element in this matter.

Mr. Speaker: In such cases, earlier also, the grievance of the hon. Members was that these terms and details are revealed and disclosed by the other party in their own country and the whole world knows it but only this Parliament does not know it. That is the difficulty. We cannot bind the other firm if they want to reveal it or disclose it. Usually it happens that they are published in the periodicals

and other publications. Then their grievance becomes legitimate that it has not been disclosed to Parliament.

Shri Krishna Menon: Just because the other party is likely to commit dereliction of their duty or their responsibilities, we cannot do it. Secondly, just because they are published in a periodical it does not mean that it is a fact. Very often these are quoted, but it is only guess work as in everything else. It is not likely that in this case the French firm has published it, because it will not be to their interests. Secondly, there has been no instance where in regard to defence manufacture certain contracts have been placed before the House.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: There is nothing to be discussed. I would just again continue the same argument that it has happened earlier. If the Minister is sure that the other party also would not do it, certainly I can give this privilege to the hon. Minister. If they think that something is not to be disclosed in the public interest I will not insist on it. But if ultimately the whole thing is disclosed and published then, then probably the criticism is justified, namely, that it was only this Parliament that was kept in the dark and that otherwise the whole world knew it. If there is a condition that they would also not disclose it, then I would not insist on it. I should give free option to the Minister to decide it certainly. But if there is no condition about it and they just do it and as a matter of course publish it, then certainly hon. Members are justified in asking that they should also know it.

Shri Krishna Menon: At the present moment, the agreement is insistent that it should not be published in regard to quantities. If they are likely to break the agreement, then of course it will be published or placed before the House or whatever you require to be done will be done.

Mr. Speaker: Is it possible for the hon. Minister to find out from them if they are likely to publish them?

Shri Krishna Menon: They have an agreement not to publish them. It may be the same way in their country also. In regard to what you said, namely, that a magazine or whatever it is, is quoted in this House as authority, I submit that very often they are inaccurate. If we have to correct them again, that would be giving information, and the people would flounder about it. About the larger question whether the facts can be shown, I will make a submission in due course. (*Interruption*).

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. There is no need to put further questions. We should not pursue it further and spend more time on it.

Shri Tyagi: I do not want to put any question, probing into the project. I only want to know how much amount by way of capital expenditure is involved in this scheme because it is ultimately to be sanctioned by us, and there is no secret about it, namely, the capital that is involved.

Mr. Speaker: Probably that might give a clue to the number that has to be manufactured.

Shri Tyagi: I am afraid any scheme which involves capital expenditure cannot be a secret. I can understand that the details may be secret but not the project. How much would the project cost—because it has to be sanctioned by us—is our concern.

Mr. Speaker: We have to take the particular case that is before us. So far as that is concerned, one question has been just answered—that it is not in the public interest to give the number. The total amount that has to be spent on that can be easily worked out.

Shri Tyagi: No, Sir. (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. If we know what has to be spent on each helicopter, certainly it can be worked out.

Shri Tyagi: My submission is, if you are going to buy....

Shri Krishna Menon rose—

Shri Tyagi: I am not yielding to him. Of course, we can understand one thing. But,.....

Mr. Speaker: He is going to answer it, and then there will be no need for further questions.

Shri Krishna Menon: It is not a separate helicopter factory that is going to be set up. It will be inaccurate to say what is the expenditure, because we will be using it in other capacities also. The figures at a particular time will come out in the budget estimates subject to the normal procedures. But to turn round and say that this is the capital invested in it would not, strictly be correct, because it is tied up with the entire process of manufacture.

Shri Tyagi: If no estimate is to be made, then I would submit that it is most irregular. If we know that they are going to be manufactured in a factory, we must know how much extra amount they are going to spend.

Mr. Speaker: Everything would come before the House when the money is wanted. Nothing has been spent so far.

Shri Tyagi: This is establishing a convention.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that it will be brought before the House, at the proper stage, if some money is wanted.

Shri Tyagi: Could he not give us a rough idea of the extra amount?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. During the Question Hour, I cannot go further than this.

Shri U. M. Trivedi: My point of order is this. This point has arisen over and over again in this House. This is the second time that a point has been made by the Defence Minister that in public interest, it is difficult to answer a question raised in the House. Whether it is a question of privilege of the Minister or it is a question of the privilege of the House is also to be determined. This House

is a sovereign body in India and it requires to know what is going on for the country and it wants to know what for the expenditure is to be made and what is the amount of expenditure. It is not the privilege of the Defence Minister to keep it away from the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. There ought not to be a speech. This point has been raised and I have also given my ruling on this.

Shri U. M. Trivedi: I submit to you that this question must be referred to the Privileges Committee to find out whether such a privilege can be claimed by the Defence Minister.

Mr. Speaker: There is no question of Privileges Committee, or anything to be referred to it. This question has been raised and an answer also has been given. Probably the hon. Member was not present here. I have given my decision on that. He will kindly consult the debates.

British Credit for expansion of Durgapur Plant

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*219. { **Shri Rameshwar Tantia:**
Shri Basumatari:

Will the Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries be pleased to state:

(a) whether a credit to the extent of £20 million has been offered by the British Government for the expansion of the Durgapur Steel Plant; and

(b) if so, the terms and conditions of the credit and how the amount is likely to be utilised?

The Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries (Shri C. Subbramaniam): (a) and (b). Government of U.K. have agreed to the grant of a loan of £22 million for purchase of Plant and Equipment required for expansion of the Durgapur Steel Plant from one million tons to 1.6 million tons. An agreement was signed in this behalf with the U.K. Government on 23rd May, 1962. The amount is to be repaid in 36 half-yearly instalments, the first of which is payable on the 31st May, 1969. The loan carries interest at the