

advertisements. And agriculture is the main business, the main avocation of our people and information on agriculture is very important.

We would rather request the Ministry to look into the matter and take a proper decision.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: What is the direction on the duration, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: This is the wish of the House.

[*Translation*]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in reply to the question regarding increasing the duration of telecasting the agricultural programmes, the hon. Minister has said that at present no increase in duration of telecasting such programmes is on anvil. Sir, agricultural programmes are directly related to the ordinary farmers living in villages and in the present circumstances, the rural culture is deteriorating day by day. In view of this peculiar situation, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has any plan to make special arrangements to telecast more and more programmes regarding agriculture for promoting the glorious traditions of the country.

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Is it about culture or the agricultural culture?

MR. SPEAKER: Culture is omnibus. Agriculture is a part of it.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Our culture is agriculture and it is our endeavour to show it more and more.

Hiring of Lobbyist in US

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*62. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA:

SHRI SUDARSAN RAY CHAUDHURI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have hired any firm for lobbying in the US;

(b) if so, the name of the firm and the salient features of the terms of appointment including fees to be paid to the firm;

(c) the criteria adopted for the selection of the firm;

(d) whether the services of associations and organisations of Indians in that country are being used to project a proper image of the country on various political and economic issues; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the results achieved thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) to (e) A *Statement* is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

1. On 12 January, 1994 the Embassy of India, Washington, signed an agreement engaging the services of the law firm M/s McAuliffe, Kelly and Raffaelli in association with the public relations firm of Daniel J. Edelman Worldwide Inc. The contract signed is initially for a period of six months at the all inclusive rate of US \$ 46,000 per month.

2. The selection of the firm was, based on the recommendation of the Ambassador of India to the US, which took into account several factors such as cost, access that the firm reportedly has in the legislative and executive branches of the US Government, the kind of attention the firm would be able to devote towards India, their experience as well as the reputation of the firm.

3. Efforts to project developments in India in their correct perspective are also undertaken by members of the Indo-American community. They undertake letter writing campaigns, utilizing electronic mail, to Congressmen, Senators, members of the Administration and other opinion makers. Such organisations remain in contact, where necessary, with our Embassy and Consulates and are provided with current information. Such efforts have assisted Government's ability to counter motivated, anti-India propaganda.

[*Translation*]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that on what basis the contract was signed with this firm for lobbying in U.S. What criteria were adopted for its selection? Has this firm any relevant experience in this field or not? Did the people related to this contract visit India and if so, did they visit the country on behalf of the firm? Did they discuss the subject here?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: I would like to tell the hon. Member that it is an experienced firm and it has already undertaken such contracts for two-three other countries. It has been called to India.....

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Which are these countries?

[*English*]

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: There is one other country. They have also contracted Taiwan. But at present we are having Thailand and Turkey.

[*Translation*]

They came to India, and during their visit, the Government had enquired about their experience and gave necessary briefing. Before the appointment of the firm, we had got the detailed information regarding their experience, reputation and goodwill. After ensuring all these things, our Washington Embassy finalised the contract.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Sir, I would like to know whether it is a fact that the said firm which has been engaged to contradict the anti-India propaganda, has experience in the field of taxation only and has no experience at all in the political arena. It is not providing its services to any country except Turkey and moreover, it has no reputation even in Turkey. I would like to know the basis on which this firm has been given preference to others which are already in the field of lobbying work. Whether it is also a fact that anti-India propaganda was going on there for a long time and Pakistan has taken services of many other lobbying firms to make anti-India propaganda? If so, what was the reason to delay the matter? Is it also a fact that Indians and people of Indian origin residing there have been continuously emphasising on the Indian Embassy for taking action to counter the anti-India propaganda which is damaging the image of the country abroad? Is the Indian

Embassy really unable to present its view-point properly and that is why it has taken the services of such an inexperienced firm? I would like to know the criteria adopted for providing the contract to such a firm? It has been stated that its performance will be reviewed after six months. I would like to know whether this review will be undertaken monthly, quarterly or only after six months? What will be the basis of this review? Why the services of other institutions are not being taken?

SHRI R. L. BHATIA: The firm contacted has a wide ranging experience in economic, political and several other sectors. It was decided by our ambassador after discussion with 2-3 firms, which had applied for it. As we found this firm more efficient in this arena, we handed over this work to this firm.

You have also asked as to why the services of Indians residing abroad, other societies and institutions are not being utilised? I would like to tell that their services are being taken and these are working very well. But you have also witnessed that pro-Pakistan and pro-Khalistan lobbies have created a lot of disturbances and raised this issue emphatically. Keeping all this in mind, we have decided to appoint a lobbying firm there. Our ambassadors and High Commissions are working very well and it is not proper to say that they are not doing anything but the problem has been continuously increasing and several pro-Pakistan and pro-Khalistan lobbies have emerged there and influenced the senators and U.S. Administration. That is why its necessity was felt and a lobbying firm was appointed.

As regards the experience of the firm, I would like to say that it has

experience and its performance will be reviewed after six months. I hope that its work will be upto the mark and it will successfully convey our views and ideas to the people of U.S.A.

[English]

SHRI SUDARSAN RAY CHAUDHURI: Sir, in the USA, the methods of activities of a lobbyist firm include, among other things, if necessary, even using bribery or sharing of gifts to influence the target people as is known by the alleged scandal of one Asian country in the mid-70's in the USA. Moreover, it goes against this appointing the lobbyist firm. It goes against the very principle of open democratic diplomacy. Thus, the appointment of a lobbyist firm is a gross departure to the accepted norms of our foreign policy. In this background, I would like to ask two questions.

(a) How is it that the Government of India did not have the Parliament's expressed opinion before appointing any lobbyist firm, not to speak of this particular firm; and

(b) Is the Government ready to take this Parliament into confidence while it would make a review of the functioning and activities of this lobbyist firm after the expiry of six months?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: Sir, it is a fact that formerly, we did not have any lobby at all. As I have explained earlier, due to the situation arising, now there are lot of Pakistani and Khalistani people active over there. So, it was felt necessary that we must also have a lobby. In this regard, whatever decisions will be made or whatever action will be taken by them and what is the report, ultimately, I will have to

come to the Parliament to report what achievements have taken place.

Your previous question is, why we have not taken permission of the Parliament in this regard. I think, it is a matter which we felt necessary. So many times in this House, the voice was raised that India is having a very low-key propaganda and having defence position while Pakistan is having a very aggressive position.

So, keeping in view all this, we have decided to have lobby. It is a fact of life in the American political system that all the countries have lobbies. If you want, I have got a very large number of countries which are having lobbies there. With your permission, can I read it?

SHRI AMAL DATTA: Can you tell us about the lobbies which are working against India?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: Pakistan is having three lobbies and a very large number of organisations. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: Can you give the details?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: I do not have the details now. But I can pass it on to you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bhatia, you are expected to reply to the main supplementary please. Otherwise, it will go on. Please continue, if you want.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: The countries which have lobbyists there are Canada, China, Egypt, Fiji, France, Britain, Israel, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

SHRI ANANDGAJAPATI RAJU POOSAPATI: In foreign policy, one has to work with a number of parameters. We find here that on non-proliferation of human rights on Kashmir, we are being beaten and we are being misunderstood at every quarter. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the brief given to this lobbyist firm, how they go about in their work, how they will work in evaluating eventually and how will it be decided whether to continue them or not to continue them for the organised system of influencing events because we are taking the beating and we are always in the dark on this issue.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: We have given the following brief to the lobbyists.

(a) Projecting India as an open, secular, pluralistic society based on parliamentary democracy with a free press and an independent judiciary.

(b) Highlighting India's economic liberalisation programme, the irreversible nature of these measures and promoting India as an investment destination.

(c) Focussing on India's needs for new technologies to facilitate the process of socio-economic development and the responsibility displayed by India in preventing re-export of sensitive data and technologies.

(d) Creating awareness of the richness and cultural diversity of India and promoting it as a tourist destination.

(e) Counteracting motivated propaganda launched by elements inimical to India, alleging human rights violations. In countering such propaganda, efforts are made to highlight the basic human rights enshrined in our

Constitution, institutional safeguards against executive excesses as well as action taken against erring officials.

(f) Countries negative reports in the USA media centering on social issues such prevalence of child labour, its use in certain export industries such as carpets and jewellery, dowry deaths, etc.

Briefs on all these points have been given to them.

SHRI ANANDGAJAPATI RAJU POOSAPATI: Are you knocking at the right door at the right time?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: That is their job.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Sir, I want to ask supplementary in the next question, if you permit.

MR. SPEAKER: But you raised your hand.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: I did.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not correct. You should have thought about it when you raised your hand.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: I am sorry, Sir.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to know from Shri Bhatia as to when did the Government feel that it has become essential to appoint a Lobbyist in America? I want to know it, through you, from the Minister because during the course of his reply he has

mentioned about the Pakistani elements, and particularly the Khalistani elements who had been indulging in anti-India propaganda there. It has come to our notice through newspapers, that the Indians there do not get any information documents from our embassy. Although they visit it time and again. The Ambassador, appointed there, is not able to provide them adequate literature to counter the anti-India propaganda being carried out there. My specific question is—whether the Indian embassy and its entire machinery has failed in projecting the overall image of India and has not been able to counter the anti-India propaganda being carried out by the embassy of our neighbouring country and that is why the decision to appoint a Lobbyist has been taken?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not agree with this view that our embassy has failed in projecting India's true image. Secondly you have said that full material and information is not being made available to the Indian Associations there. This is not true. The Indian Associations established there are helping us. Some of them are; National Federation of Indian American Association, Association of Indians in America, Indo-American Forum, Indo-American Political Action, Globalisation of people of Indian Origin. The list is quite long. All publications are provided to them and often discussions and Question-Answer sessions are held. They are briefed also. But they were not active earlier. When certain elements there made hue and cry, the Indians residing there became active and they are now helping the embassy which provides typed materials to all associations. Regarding why it was not done earlier, I would say that it was under our consideration (*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, please reply to the main supplementary.

[Translation]

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: We did not feel the need as our embassy was doing its work satisfactorily, as it is being done now. When the Organisations making hue and cry indulged in anti-India propaganda... (*Interruptions*) Other Governments, nations and companies appoint Lobbyists, we felt that, we too should take the benefit of this system.

[English]

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have heard the replies of the hon. Minister. I want to clear one doubt which persists in my mind. As far as these lobbyists are concerned, I feel we have no proficiency or capability in advocating our case before that Government. That is why we are seeking the help of the lobbyists. But there is one thing. Whenever lobbying is required. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Here we don't want the rationale for appointing the lobbyists, We want the question.

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Whenever lobbyists are required, they should be very close to the Government in that country so that our lobbying can be effective. In my opinion, that should be the criterion. But the Minister in his reply has stated that...

MR. SPEAKER: I am not allowing this kind of a question. Let it be very clear. You please come out with your question.

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: I would like to know in categorical terms as to why this particular firm has been selected or recommended by the Embassy of India in that country.

MR. SPEAKER: Very good question! What are the criteria?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: As I explained earlier, our Mission is doing good work. But as you know, these lobbyists are experts and they have access to the State Department.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who told you that they are experts?

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Here we want to know the reasons for selection. What are the criteria?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: The criterion for appointing lobbyists is to project India's image outside and take their expert advice. That is how we have engaged those lobbyists.

To an earlier question, I have now got the information. I would like to inform that there was an assurance in this House by the Government about lobbying. This question arose about five years back. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: Speaker, Sir, it is within my own experience that the Indian diplomats in USA feel very cornered, even today—and I found them so in November-December when I was there—because of the propaganda of Pakistan regarding human rights violation by India in Kashmir. They think that their only duty is to counter this propaganda and nothing more. When I asked them as to why they do not give out the Pakistan's

own history in the sphere of human rights, their reply was that everybody knows about it. But, on my personal enquiry I found that nobody knows because at least in the United Nations all the diplomats from the developing countries are very young people. They have no idea how Pakistan came into being; what has been the record of Pakistan in the field of Human Rights and so on. Ultimately, a Paper was prepared and then the Pakistan withdrew its resolution on Human Rights.

There is definitely a policy to go on countering what Pakistan is doing, but there is no policy on our part to take offensive. I would like to know from the Minister, what was the Government of India's policy regarding this earlier and whether they have changed it or they are going to change this policy in the near future.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: Our Missions abroad are giving information to other governments. We are also providing information to the embassies of different countries. We always apprise them of particular situation and our Missions are constantly in touch with the respective governments and they are providing all the information that is required.

SHRI UMRAO SINGH: Sir, the Indian communities abroad, of which the majority belongs to my State and my constituency, have their genuine grievances.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a completely different thing.

SHRI UMRAO SINGH: They have a problem regarding dual citizenship and such other problems which they face locally. Similar problems had occurred in

UK and US also. In UK, Indian Overseas Congress has done a very commendable job and we do not need any lobby there. I would like to know from the Minister why cannot we have a similar organisation in America which shall be composed of all Indians and it should help us in creating a lobby, as is being done in United Kingdom.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: As I have explained earlier, there are a number of Indian organisations regarding which I have just now given the information. They are all doing a good job. We are assisting them with the necessary information and they are playing a good role. We cannot coordinate all of them because there are different types of people who are working at different levels. For instance, students are involved, lawyers are involved and even business people are involved. In their own sphere everybody is contributing towards it. All of them are doing a good job.

[Translation]

US Views on Kashmir and Punjab

*63. SHRI CHETAN P.S.
CHAUHAN:

SHRI PARASRAM
BHARDWAJ:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the recent views expressed by the US President and the other high officials of the State Department of that country on Kashmir and Punjab;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;