

LOK SABHA

Friday, February 17, 1961/Magha 28,
1882 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Shri Dwivedi—Absent.
He was very anxious to put a number
of questions yesterday. Sardar
Iqbal Singh—Absent. Next question.

Espionage Ring

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*84. { Shri A. M. Tariq:
Shri D. C. Sharma:
Shri P. C. Deb:
Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri:
Shri Sampath:
Shri Prakash Vir Shastri:
Shri S. A. Mehdi:
Shri M. L. Dwivedi:
Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:
Shri Amjad Ali:
Shri Assar:
Shri Vajpayee:
Shri Liladhar Kotoki:
Shri Goray:
Shri Mohan Swarup:
Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi:
Shri Chintamoni Panigrahi:
Shri Raghunath Singh:
Shri Naldurgkar:
Shri Rajeshwar Patel:
Shri Bishwanath Roy:
Shri P. C. Borooah:
Shri Rameshwar Tantia:
Shrimati Mafida Ahmed:
Shri M. B. Thakore:
Shri Ram Krishan Gupta:
Shri Hem Barua:

Shri Nath Pal:
Shri Dhanagar:
Shri Damani:
Shri B. C. Mullick:
Shri Kalika Singh:
Shri Pahadia:

Will the Minister of Home Affairs
be pleased to state:

(a) whether three espionage rings
have been unearthed in Delhi re-
cently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of persons arrested
so far;

(d) to what Ministries do they be-
long;

(e) whether the missing papers, if
any, have been recovered from them;
and

(f) what special steps have been
taken to stop recurrence of such in-
cidents?

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri
G. B. Pant): (a) to (f). Four cases of
leakage of information contained in
secret documents to some foreign
Embassy personnel and a foreign firm
have come to notice recently. Eight
persons have been arrested in this
connection including six junior Gov-
ernment officials of the Planning Com-
mission and the Ministries of External
Affairs and Defence. No papers ap-
pear to be missing. Appropriate
measures have been taken to ensure
that such leakages do not occur.

श्री अ० मु० तारिक : जैसा वजीर
दाखिला ने फरमाया है, कोई पेपर गायब नहीं
हुआ तो मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जब
उन लोगों पर मुकदमे चल रहे हैं और कोई पेपर
गायब नहीं हुआ है तो असली जुर्म की
नवयत क्या है।

[شری اے۔ ایم۔ طارق - جیسا
وزیر داخلہ نے فرمایا ہے کوئی
بھٹے فائل نہیں ہوا - تو میں یہ
جاننا چاہتا ہوں کہ جب ان لوگوں پر
مقدمہ چل رہے ہیں اور کوئی پیپر
غائب نہیں ہوا ہے تو اصلی جرم کی
نوعیت کیا ہے]

شری: ۱۰ ب ۰ پ ۰ ت : کچھ لوگوں نے، جو
پکڑے گئے ہیں، جو سیکرٹ کاغذات سے ان کی
نکالے دوسرے لوگوں کو دے دی ہیں، اور واجے میٹوں
پر جو ایتلا اٹل میں بھی ان کو انہوں نے
اور اٹل پر ان تک پہنچا دیا۔

شری: ۱۰ ب ۰ ت ۰ ر : چونکہ اس سے
یہاں بھی ایک یا دو میٹوں پر ایسے واقعات
ہوئے ہیں کہ ہماری وزارتوں کی اٹل اور
خفیہ فائلوں چوری ہوئی، اس لیے میں جاننا
چاہتا ہوں کہ کیا ہوم مینسٹری نے یا ہمارے
ایٹل جنرل ڈیپارٹمنٹ نے کوئی ایسی کارروائی
کی جس سے کہ وزارتوں کے اٹل پر ایسی
فائلوں کو محفوظ رکھنے کا کوئی انتظام
ہو سکے، اور اگر نہیں ہے تو کیا ایسا کرنے
کے لیے کوئی چیز پیش کرنا ہے؟

[شری اے۔ ایم۔ طارق - چونکہ
اس سے پیشتر بھی ایک یا دو
بار ایسے واقعات ہوئے ہیں کہ ہماری
وزارتوں کی ضروری اور خفیہ فائلوں
چوری ہوئی ہیں۔ اس لیے میں جاننا
چاہتا ہوں کہ ہوم مینسٹری نے یا
ہمارے ایٹل جنرل ڈیپارٹمنٹ نے
کوئی ایسی کارروائی کی جس سے کہ
وزارتوں کے اندر ایسی فائلوں کو محفوظ
رکھنے کا کوئی انتظام ہو سکے۔ اور اگر
نہیں ہے تو کیا ایسا کرنے کے لیے
کوئی چیز پیش نظر ہے۔]

شری: ۱۰ ب ۰ پ ۰ ت : اس کے لیے اس
تہ پر کارروائی کی گئی ہے، اور ان کارروائیوں
کے متاثرین کو اس سے اس سے اس سے اس سے
تاکید کی گئی ہے۔ اگر ان کارروائیوں

کے متاثرین کو اس سے اس سے اس سے اس سے
تاکید کی گئی ہے۔ اگر ان کارروائیوں

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know
whether the Government is in a posi-
tion to disclose which foreign em-
bassies and which foreign firms have
been trying to get secret information
from the officers of the Ministries of
the Government of India in this
clandestine way?

Shri G. B. Pant: No officers as such
are involved. People who have been
found guilty of such leakages belong
to the subordinate ministerial class:
that is, they are either assistants or
section officers.

Shri D. C. Sharma: I want to know
which foreign embassy or foreign
firm is involved in this kind of ac-
quisition of secret information in a
criminal way.

Shri G. B. Pant: One particular
firm is involved—hon. Members will
excuse me if I do not give the name
of it—it is a foreign firm.

Some Hon. Members: Embassies
also.

Shri Tyagi: What steps have been
taken against that firm? (Interrup-
tions).

Shri G. B. Pant: The case is under
investigation and action will be taken.

Shri Tyagi: Has any action been
taken against the employees of the
Government of India and if so what
action has been actually taken against
those who are responsible?

Shri G. B. Pant: Of these four
cases, investigation has been complet-
ed in the case of two. Four persons
have been arrested and detained under
the Preventive Detention Act.

Some Hon. Members: The names of
the embassies can be given. Why
can't they be?

Shri Hem Barua: On a point of
order.

Mr. Speaker: What is the point of
order?

Shri Hem Barua: The point of order is this. This is a serious matter involving the security of our country. The hon. Home Minister says that investigation is proceeding. After investigation is over these people may be exonerated, but at the same time I want to know from you whether the Minister would be in a position to withhold information from the House.

Shri G. B. Pant: I think I can seek the indulgence of the House and of hon. Members to allow me not to give information, divulgence of which I do not think will be in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has raised a point of order. The hon. Minister thinks that it is not in the public interest to disclose the information. Normally, we should not interfere at all. Particularly in this case merely because an accusation is made against somebody, we should not presume there is a *prima facie* case. Ultimately the party may be exonerated, and the whole thing may turn out to be false. Should we not have so much of confidence in our Ministers and allow them to take this House into confidence at such time that they consider to be appropriate. When we are dealing with embassies it will be inconvenient and it will be dangerous. After all it may be true, or it may not be true. I would, therefore, leave it to the hon. Minister at this stage to decide whether he should disclose or not. He says he will say it at some time if he finds that the allegations are true.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: The allegations are against certain employees of ours. The Home Minister has said that action is being taken against them. There are no allegations against embassies; so, we cannot take any action against them. We only want their names—which are those embassies which have been trying to get secret information from our Ministries.

Shri G. B. Pant: May I clear up the position. I said that there are four

cases. With regard to two, four of our employees have been detained under the Preventive Detention Act. The other two are under investigation. I may also add that the representatives, or the junior officials of the embassies concerned in the two cases in which our own employees have been detained, have been sent out of our country. That is, they have returned to their country. I feel that it is a delicate matter. The embassies themselves may or may not have any knowledge of the case.

Shri Vajpayee: They must be having knowledge.

Shri G. B. Pant: I do not think that they have.

Shri Vajpayee: Are we to understand that these employees are functioning on their behalf?

Shri G. B. Pant: Not that they are functioning on their behalf. I know our own Intelligence people made many enquiries of which the Government have no knowledge whatsoever. That may be the case. I am not protecting any embassy; I am not interested in it.

Shri Tyagi: May I know if the junior employees of those Embassies are Indian nationals or they are foreigners?

Shri G. B. Pant: They are foreigners and they have been sent away from the country.

Shri Ranga: Apart from the fact whether those Embassies and their employees can be treated as being guilty of trying to get information from us or not, what are the countries in regard to which this correspondence has been meddled with and in regard to which Government has been obliged to take this action?

Shri G. B. Pant: Well, the information that has been meddled with does not relate to the countries to which those Embassies are attached.

Shri Ranga: We are not interested in regard to the Embassies here. Whether the Embassies are really responsible in trying to get this information or not is another question. But what are those countries relating to which there was this correspondence and there was this attempt on the part of some of the employees, either of the Embassies or of our own Ministry, to meddle with it?

Shri G. B. Pant: The documents which were the subject of the leakages need not necessarily concern other countries: some information may have related to matters concerning our own country. In some cases there may be some matters which also concern some other country. But I cannot give details about these things.

Shri Goray: Though the hon. Minister is refusing to give information, some information has already appeared in the press and some countries have been named. Is it good that this House should not get the information which the press is getting? What happens to the honour of these countries? Suppose the information given by the press is wrong. Should not the hon. Minister tell us what is the right thing and which are the countries?

Shri Ranga: And there have been editorial comments also.

Shri Goray: Only the House seems to be getting no information.

Shri G. B. Pant: No information was given to the press by the Government or any one on its behalf?

Mr. Speaker: Whatever happens happens in the public. If, for example, a man is arrested, even without the Home Minister giving any information to the newspapers that a particular man has been arrested, the newspaper correspondent gets that information; he makes enquiries here and there and something appears in the press. But it is one thing for newspapers to publish something and quite

another for Government to make an authoritative statement with respect to that matter. Can't we appreciate the difference?

Shri Hem Barua: May I make a submission? It is for the Government to make an authoritative statement in the face of the statement appearing in the press. The statement in the press may not be correct and it might be prejudicial against the country. Therefore, Government should make an authoritative statement.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members will also appreciate that immediately Government cannot rush to the press and say "this is correct". They are making an investigation. What is the meaning of this?

Shri Tyagi: Only this innocent information can be given, namely, to which Embassies those employees belonged who have been sent out of India, where were they employed. This information is innocent. It does not attribute to any person.

Shri G. B. Pant: That is a very ingenious way of putting the same question!

Shri Braj Raj Singh: To which countries have they been sent?

Mr. Speaker: I do not think there is any harm in saying to which Embassies these employees belonged. In view of the interest hon. Members are taking on this matter, I do not think it will be wrong for the hon. Minister to give the names of the Embassies to which these employees belonged, who have been sent out.

Shri Tyagi: It is a factual information.

Shri G. B. Pant: If the names of the Embassies are given, then all the answers that I have given so far about the difficulty of disclosing the information become meaningless. But if you order me....

Mr. Speaker: Next question. We have had enough.

Working Hours in Government Offices

*85. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to change the working hours in Government offices or effect an increase in the working hours;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons therefor?

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri G. B. Pant): (a) No such proposal is under consideration.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Shri D. C. Sharma: Some proposals have been made so far as the working hours and holidays are concerned with regard to the High Courts and other offices concerned with these Ministries. May I know if anything is being done in regard to the working hours of these offices, to change the working hours or do something of that kind?

Shri G. B. Pant: The High Court Judges are not governed by the orders issued by Government. The orders that Government issue apply to their own staff which is directly working under the Government.

श्री भक्त दर्शन : पिछले दिनों समाचार-पत्रों में इस आशय का समाचार प्रकाशित हुआ था कि गवर्नमेंट यह विचार कर रही है कि महीने में दो शनिवारों को छुट्टी हो और प्रति दिन एक घंटा काम बढ़ा दिया जाए। क्या इस पर कभी विचार किया गया था या विचार ही नहीं किया गया था ?

श्री गो० ब० पन्त : इस पर विचार हुआ था, लेकिन यही रखा गया कि जो समय इस वक्त है वही रहे, मगर दो शनिवारों के बदले एक शनिवार को छुट्टी हो।

Shri S. M. Banerjee: May I know the circumstances under which Governments changed the recommendations of the Pay Commission regarding working on two Saturdays in the month? What were the specific reasons?

Shri G. B. Pant: Well, the Government thought that the people working under the Government would be able to do their work better and to do more of it if there was only one Saturday holiday in a month and not two.

Shri Tangamani: In view of the fact that the employees are now working on three full Saturdays, instead of four half Saturdays, may I know whether there is any arrangement made in regard to their holidays, to compensate for this extra day of working?

Shri G. B. Pant: I did not quite follow the question, but it is true that formerly the offices were closed for half of the day on Saturdays and now they work on Saturdays as on other days of the week.

Shri Tangamani: That means that they are now working for one extra day, which was not contemplated in the Pay Commission report. I wanted to know whether any alternative arrangement is being made to compensate this, by way of giving holidays or otherwise?

Shri G. B. Pant: There are, I think, certain concessions regarding holidays etc., but I cannot give the details; nor can I say that that arrangement is being made by way of compensation for cutting out one Saturday out of the two proposed by the Pay Commission.

Shri D. C. Sharma: There was mention some time back that the office hours should be staggered in order to avoid the high traffic incidence. May I know if anything has been done in this respect?

Shri G. B. Pant: It was found that such an arrangement would be very