

12.35 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE****REPORTED SMUGGLING OF FOREIGN
WATCHES, ETC., BY SOME EUROPEAN
CONSULAR OFFICIALS IN CALCUTTA**

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN (Kangra) :
Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of External Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance, and request that he may make a statement thereon :

"The reported regular smuggling of foreign watches, cameras and other valuable restricted items into India for sale by a section of Consular officials representing European countries in Calcutta and steps taken by Government in this regard."

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH) : Two cases of smuggling of contraband item by members of the Consular Corps in Calcutta were detected recently. They were immediately brought to the attention of the Heads of their respective Missions in New Delhi. As a result, both the persons have already been sent back from India. The contraband goods in both the cases were seized by the Government.

Necessary steps continue to be taken to prevent and detect such cases.

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN : Sir, India has become a paradise for smugglers and our ports have become smuggling dens. Calcutta and Bombay top the list.

Gold is being smuggled diamond is being smuggled. Luxury goods like record players, watches and cameras are smuggled. Some people in every class are involved in smuggling and to top it all, we have certain personnel of the diplomatic corps who are involved in this racket.

Recently, in the Hindustan Times dated 3rd August, there was a news item to the effect that crores of rupees worth of foreign watches and cameras and other restricted items of value are being regularly smuggled into India for sale by a section of consular officials; the contraband material is impor-

ted through the privilege of inspection-free clearance.

No., in the present state of affairs, my questions are : has any effort been made to modify this law so that those who are involved in the smuggling are tried by the ordinary law of the land.

Secondly, how many businessmen and traders have been arrested, who are connected with these foreign personnel and what is the number and in which parts of the country they have been caught.

Thirdly, what steps are the Government taking to prevent smuggling by the diplomatic corps in future ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : With regard to the first question, there is no proposal to modify the law, because we have subscribed to the Vienna conventions, and if the members of the diplomatic corps are contravening the law, then we can inspect the consignments. Actually, the consignments in two cases which I have mentioned, were inspected and contraband articles were confiscated.

I have no information about any businessmen having been arrested in smuggling cases, because that will be a wider question. We got these two consignments, and in these two cases, the consignments were actually inspected, and the contraband articles were confiscated. They are Government property now.

About the steps to be taken, I would not like the hon. Member to press us to divulge the steps because the very object that we intend to secure will be defeated if they are disclosed. The steps that we have taken have enabled us recently to detect two consignments, and the fact that these consignments have been detected and the articles have been confiscated, itself, I hope will put the fear of God and law into the minds of these people, at any rate, of the diplomatic corps who might be indulging in this type of activities.

श्री जगन्नाथ प्रसाद मुत्तिया (बस्ती) : क्या मंत्री जी बतायेंगे कि कब से यह स्मuggling चल रही है ?

श्री स्वर्ण सिंह : यह बड़ा कठिन मसाला है मेरे लिये कहना कि कब से यह चल रहा है।
(Interruptions). They were detected for the first time. How long that was going on, I cannot say.

SHRI ANANT PRASAD DHUSIA :
What was the amount involved in this ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : There two consignments which we have detected were quite substantial. Goods worth Rs. 23 lakhs were involved.

श्री सत्यपाल कपूर (पटियाला) : अब जहाँ तक मिनिस्टर साहब के स्टेटमेंट का ताल्लुक है उस में सिर्फ इस केस के बारे में बतलाया गया है बाकी आज हमारे मुल्क में यह बात किसी से छिपी हुई नहीं है कि मुल्क के किसी हिस्से में जो भी स्मगलड गुड्स चाहिए वह मिल सकते हैं। इस में कंस्टम वाले भी शामिल रहते हैं और इम्बेसी वाले भी लोग करते हैं, नहीं करते हैं, वे भी करते हैं क्योंकि इस में पकड़े गये लेकिन सारे मुल्क में आज स्मगलड सिप्रेट चाहिए, स्मगलड व्हिस्की चाहिए, जापानी कपड़ा चाहिए, कैमरा चाहिए, ब्लेड चाहिए, गरज जो भी चीज चाहिए हर एक चीज मिलती है और जितनी अधिक तादाद में चाहिए उतनी अधिक तादाद में वह मिलती है। सबाल यह है कि आज एक स्कैंडल पकड़ा गया, डिप्लोमैटिक कोर के कुछ आदमी इस में इनवाल्व्ड थे...
(व्यवधान)

मेरा कहने का मतलब यह है कि मिनिस्ट्री आफ एक्सटर्नल एफेयर्स, मिनिस्ट्री आफ फोरन ट्रेड, कामर्स मिनिस्टरी और होम मिनिस्टरी बापि इस मसले के ऊपर आपस में बैठकर सोच विचार करें कि इस मुल्क में करोड़ों रुपये का मास नेपाल के धोरडर से आता है, समुद्र के जरिए आता है वह किस ढंग से आता है और यह कि उस को किस तरीके से कंट्रोल करना है? इस मुल्क की एकोनामी पर उस का बहुत बुरा असर पड़ रहा है जिसे कि हमें रोकना है।

दूसरी बात मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि किस मुल्क के एफिजिएल्स इनवाल्व्ड थे, किस मुल्क के डिप्लोमैटिक कोर के लोग इस में इनवाल्व्ड थे जिन से कि यह माल पकड़ा गया, जो लोग पकड़े गये और जोकि इस काम को करते थे उन के बारे में मंत्री महोदय बतलायें कि वे कौन थे?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : With regard to the proposal made by the hon. Member I should like to thank him; it is a good proposal and I shall request my colleague the Finance Minister to take note of this. About his second question I have purposely not given the names of the countries to whom these two diplomats belonged and I should appeal to the hon. Member not to press me to do so. In one case the consignment itself was abandoned in the sense that the person in whose name the consignment was sent said: I have nothing to do with it and we had to open it in the presence of the officer of the customs department and other respectable persons and contraband goods valued 18 lakhs were found in that consignment. But he disclaimed any connection with it. These are the types of difficulties that we face in such cases.

SHRI NIHAR LASKAR (Karimganj): We have drawn attention to this fact because we are all concerned at the way smuggling is increasing. Government had also come out with a statement that unauthorised use of foreign exchange is to the extent of Rs. 240 crores. They asked certain committees to go into this and they have given certain recommendations also. Would the Government implement those recommendations or think of other ways to stop this?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : I am sure that my colleague the Finance Minister is fully seized of this matter.

12.43 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES (CENTRAL)
(AMENDMENT) RULES, 1972

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of