

14 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

FOUNDATION COLUMNS OF APPROACH ROAD TO SAFDARJUNG BRIDGE REPORTED TO BE BELOW SPECIFICATIONS

SHRI B. V. NAIK (Kahara): On a point of order, Sir. Calling attention motions are confined to items of urgent, public importance. I do not see what is so urgent, so important, about this Safdarjung bridge....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. You are questioning the decision of the Speaker in admitting it. How can this be in order?

Mr. Panda.

SHRI D. K. PANDA (Bhanjanagar): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Works and Housing to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon —

"The foundation columns of the approach road to Safdarjung bridge reported to be much below specifications."

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND IN THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI OM MEHTA) M/s. Dewan Suraj Prakash Chopra and Sons have been entrusted by the New Delhi Municipal Committee to carry out work of construction of an overbridge on Mehrauli Road near Safdarjung Airport. On receipt of information on March 18, 1973, about some deficiencies in the execution of the work, the technical officers of the Committee carried out excavations at the site and found that two piles of the retaining wall on the southern side of the bridge which were to go to a depth of 3.5 meters according to the specification had actually been left at 0.57 meter. The contractor had claimed and received payment for the work relating to the construc-

tion of these piles as if they had been taken to the required depth as per specifications, which was considered to be a criminal offence and accordingly a report was lodged by the Chief Engineer, N.D.M.C. with the Police Station, Defence Colony on the night between 18th and 19th March, 1973. Investigations are in progress. Police have so far arrested Shri Suraj Prakash Chopra and his son of the firm of Contractors and Shri S. K. Tandon, Junior Engineer of the N.D.M.C.

The N.D.M.C. has placed under suspension the concerned Municipal Engineer, Assistant Engineer and Junior Engineer.

SHRI D. K. PANDA: It is reported in the press that several complaints in the past have been pouring into the N.D.M.C. office against the work of the same contractor. It is also reported that some matters were discussed in the N.D.M.C. meeting. In spite of that, no action was taken in the beginning, though for the last few years the construction work is going on. The nature of those complaints also are not disclosed by the minister, though actually there have been several complaints. Therefore, there is something fishy about it because after it was detected some action has been taken only by way of arresting the contractors. But that does not solve the problem. This does not take us to the root of the matter. We know in the past and even today it is continuing that the contractors have been exploiting the contract labour and also exploiting the public exchequer. They are cheating the Government and also the workers. We have enough examples of it in the various States. In certain places in Orissa they are trafficking in Adibasi girls. It was raised in this House twice in the form of Calling Attention. Then, in Rajasthan. ..

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: How is all this relevant? You are going to Orissa and Rajasthan. This relates to a particular bridge. Please be relevant.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore): He is describing the breed of contractors.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The breed of contractors is not the subject before the House.

SHRI D. K. PANDA: This contract system....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He is talking of the contract system.

SHRI D. K. PANDA: He is a contractor.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That does not mean you should talk about the contract system. Be relevant

SHRI D. K. PANDA: In the case of the Rajasthan Canal the work had to be stopped because the same contractor did something wrong. So, I want to know whether as a permanent remedy they are going to abolish the contract system. Secondly, under the rules the Chief Engineer and the Assistant Engineer are expected to supervise the work at every stage of the work. What were they doing all these years? What action has been taken against them? Thirdly, what is the nature of the complaints against this contractor in the complaints received by the NDMC?

SHRI OM MEHTA: The hon. Member has raised many points. I will reply to them one by one. He said that the construction work was going on for the last two years. The construction work started only in April 1972. So, it is less than one year since the work started. Whenever any complaints were received, our officers were going into them and in many works payments have been withheld. We have also been persuading the contractors to rectify the defects.

Under the PWD Manual the engineers, the supervisory staff, are expected to go and inspect the work periodically to check whether there are any defects in the work carried

out by the contractor. In this particular case there was some laxity. The vigilance was not as much as we expected them to be. It is for this very reason that not only the junior engineer who was supervising the work but the senior engineers, the municipal engineer and assistant executive engineer have been put under suspension. Already a case has been registered against them and one of them is under arrest. They are searching for others also so that they can arrest them.

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Akola): Are they absconding?

SHRI OM MEHTA: Yes, those who have been put under suspension.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: He has asked a specific question as to what were the nature of the complaints against this contractor.

SHRI OM MEHTA: A complaint was received that the pile which was to be done upto a depth of 12 feet was done only upto 1.5 feet. This was the specific complaint against him.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: The Minister stated that there were earlier complaints against him from time to time. What were they?

SHRI OM MEHTA: There were cracks in the retaining wall. There was also a complaint about the material used by him.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD (Bhagalpur): Imagine, Mr Deputy-Speaker, a few months after this when this bridge had opened, the collapse that would have taken place, under the weight of traffic that would have been passing over it, of this bridge costing about Rs. 2 crores or, to be exact, Rs. 1.85 crores. Imagine the loss of lives that would have been caused on this account. Imagine, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, the fact that it would have collapsed because the pillars that are to support the main bridge are just 2 feet deep instead of 12 feet

[Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad]

deep. Imagine what a criminal thing would have happened. In this capital city of Delhi. Who knows how many persons would have been killed! If this is not important for call-attention, what else in this country can be? (Interruptions)

I must say that this engineer who caught it must have been a mad man or, perhaps, he could not adjust with the contractor—the percentage was not correct in adjustment. Whatever may have been the case, I appreciate the man who, somehow, caught it. Now I find the Chief Engineer visiting the site and collecting the samples. I would like to know from the Minister on how many occasions how many times, his supervisory staff, about whom he mentioned, visited this place. This is a huge project and not a project costing a few thousand rupees, this is worth Rs. 2 crores and involves the lives of lakhs and lakhs of the citizens of this city. How many times have the supervisory staff about whom he mentioned, visited the site, and what reports did they submit? Is it a fact that those persons submitted report saying 'o.k.' and then the contractors got all his payments for the pillars which are only two feet deep instead of 12 feet deep? Why is it that a junior engineer, Mr S K Tandon, a small fry, has been arrested? Why were the other engineers who have been kept under suspension not arrested? Why is there this discrimination? Why were the executive engineers and chief engineer not arrested? As I said it is not a project costing merely a few thousand rupees. Was this engineer the only one who was doing it? Why is it stated in this report that only one junior engineer has been arrested? What about the big ones who have been responsible for this? They were responsible for the payment. The cheques must have been signed by them and not by the junior man, Mr Tandon? He has been arrested, it is alright. But why not the other officers also who were responsible for this? That is, perhaps, because the racket of sharing is running. (Interruption) I would like to

have a precise answer from the Minister. The clerk may have prepared the Bill, may have written the cheque. He has been caught. But what about the officer who signed the cheque? I want a precise answer from the Minister on this. I would like to know how far the police has travelled and also has to travel. Who are the other persons who will be arrested in this regard? How many persons are still at large? I read in papers that this contractor has also other brothers in this contract who are out of the town possibly on some visit. May I know whether they have been traced and whether they are going to be arrested? I would also like to know whether the Nagar Palika high top brass who are supposed to go and see have something to do in this case. Hence the urgency and the importance of the call attention. There can be no greater crime and I would even say, a more heinous crime than this which would have involved the lives of many many citizens of this country, only after a few months.

SHRI OM MEHTA My friend has asked as to why action has been taken against the small fry only and not against the engineers—to use his word—against the 'magar mach'. We have taken action against the 'magar mach' also. The engineer who has signed the cheque has been suspended and a case under Section 5 of the Prevention of Corruption Act has been registered against him and it is for the Police to arrest him and I gather from the Police just now before coming to this House that they are after him and he is absconding and they want to arrest him. . . (Interruptions) There is nothing to hide. We have already registered a case against him and also the Assistant Engineer who was to supervise the work and who used to go there everyday. The Executive Engineer was to make the payment and the Assistant Engineer was responsible for the supervision. The junior engineer had to be there every-time because it was his direct responsibility and we have not spared any of the engineers who are responsible for this laxity. . . (Interruptions) The

case has been registered and they are absconding. Only two or three days ago the case has been registered.

The police is after them and it is the duty of the Police.... (Interruptions)

About the contractors system, because we do not have such a large set up we are trying to have some organization in the public sector which can replace it. We have already got an organization in the Works and Housing Ministry which are undertaking a lot of work in the PWD and others but we do not have so many organisations and so for some time to come, we will have to tolerate these contractors until we build some public sector agency which will execute this work and which the Government want to do.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: I asked whether it was inspected by the superior officers and if so, did they submit any report? That is an important point.

SHRI OM MEHTA: It was inspected by the Chief Engineer of the Municipal Committee. It was inspected by the Vigilance Officer and even the Central Vigilance Commission and the Technical Examiner. They have all inspected. When these defects were discovered by these officers, no payment was made. The payment has been withheld.

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोश (शाजापुर)
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, हम चाहते हैं कि सरकार मजबूत रहे और वह जो काम करती है, या कराती है, वह भी मजबूत रहे, लेकिन ऐसा लगता है कि उसकी तरफ ध्यान नहीं दिया जाता है। इस सम्बन्ध में कई बातें ऐसी हैं, जिन पर प्रकाश डालना बहुत आवश्यक है। यह कोई दिल्ली का सबाल ही नहीं है। आपको याद होगा कि 1 मार्च को शिपिंग एंडा ट्रांस्पोर्ट मिनिस्टर ने चम्बल ब्रिज के बारे में इस सदन में एक

स्टेटमेंट दिया था। वह ब्रिज तो सरकार के सी० पी० डब्ल्यू० डी० द्वारा 1959 में बनाया गया था। मन्त्री महोदय के स्टेटमेंट में पना लगता है

“ that one pier of Chambal Bridge on the National Highway No. 3 near Dholpur had settled and a part of the length of the roadway along the bridge had also crept and that the bridge has been closed to traffic.”

यह है इस सरकार का काम। श्री भगवत झा झाजाद के बार-बार पूछने पर भी मन्त्री महोदय ने यह नहीं है बनाया कि क्या सरकार के चीफ टेक्निकल एग्जामिनेर ने दो महीने पहले इसी ब्रिज के बारे में रिपोर्ट को 'ओके' किया था या नहीं।

I want a categorical reply from the Minister whether there was any report from the Chief Technical Examiner just before two months and he had given a OK report and how all of a sudden this has crept in.

इतना ही नहीं, इस पुल के इतने खम्बे होने के बावजूद उन्हीं खम्बों का कैसे पता लगा लिया गया, जो बिल्कुल बिलो-स्प-सिफिकेशन हैं।

मैंने खबर देखी है, जिसमें मुझे कुछ सदेह हो गया है। आप जानते हैं कि मैं इधर-उधर की बातों को देखता नहीं हूँ, श्री ज्योतिर्मय बसु देखते होंगे। मैंने पढ़ा है:

“It may be recalled that the Chopras were also contractors of Maruti Ltd.—the small car plant of Sanjay Gandhi.... (Interruptions).”

श्री के० एस० चावड़ा (पाटन):
मारुति का जब नाम आता है तब सब खड़े हो जाते हैं यह क्या बात है?

हैं। और यहाँ जो इनका काटकट ब्रेक हो गया तो कोई कारण होगा, इसीलिए तो ब्रेक हुआ। इसकी वजह से उनके मन में शका आई क्योंकि जब उन्होंने काटकट ब्रेक किया तो यही आदमी यहाँ भी काम कर रहा है। मेरे मित्र पद्म जी ने पूछा था कि What is the nature of the complaints? Many complaints were received previously What is the nature of this complaint?

जब कोई एक कम्पनी कोई काटकट तोड़ देती है तो स्वाभाविक रूप में मन में सदेह आ जाता है कि कोई कारण तो जरूर होगा। यही काटकटर यदि यहाँ भी काम कर रहा है तो जरूर उसमें सदेह पैदा हो जाता है कि यदि कोई एक ऐसी एस्टैब्लिशमेंट फर्ग्युसन लिमिटेड जैसी एक ऐसे काटकटर के साथ काटकट तोड़ देती है तो स्वाभाविक रूप से मन में सदेह आ जाता है। इसलिए मैं मन्त्री महोदय से पूछता हूँ कि आखिर दो, रू० से काम चल रहा था तो यह दो ही रु० के पास क्यों देखने के लिए गए, यह दो रु० क्यों ऐसे मिले, दो ही खम्भों को देखने के लिए उमी के पास क्यों गये? उस का नेत्र जो था वह क्या इम दुरिट से था कि that he showed a rare audacity to file a complaint and went to the court इसकी वजह से एक एडवोकेट के रूप में था? अब मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ। और दूसरी बात यह जो टेक्निकल आफिसर है जिन्होंने दो महीने पहले रिपोर्ट दिया था या नहीं दिया था यदि ओ० के० रिपोर्ट दिया था तो उनके खिलाफ क्या एक्शन लिया गया क्योंकि मैं यह जरूर चाहता हूँ कि जो भी इसके लिए जिम्मेदार हो किसी को भी स्पेयर न करने हुए सबको सजा मिले। आज देल के अन्दर जो अपराधी है उसको सजा नहीं होती। इसलिए मैंने यह चम्बल का कोट किया .. (अवधान) सरकारी काम जहाँ होता है वहाँ क्या यह चलेगा या नहीं चलेगा? आखिर जिम्मेदारी तो हमारी हो जाती है .. (अवधान)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. I had allowed him to make a reference to Chambal Project just as an instance. There is no question about the Chambal project and the Minister will not reply to it.

SHRI JAGANNATHRAO JOSHI. I simply quoted the Chambal matter.

SHRI R S PANDEY (Rajnandgaon) In order to draw the inference

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER No, no. I cannot allow him unless he rises to a point of order

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी मैं इसके बारे में पूरी जाच चाहता हूँ और इस फर्म के बारे में जो रिपोर्ट आई थी, उसको दृष्टि में रखते हुए जो जो इसमें शामिल हैं, जो इसके लिए जिम्मेदार है उन सबको सख्त से सख्त सजा मिले—इसका आश्वासन चाहता हूँ।

श्री ओम सहता. मैं माननीय जोशी जी को यकीन दिलाता हूँ कि हम किसी भी काटकटर को, चाहे जो हो

एक माननीय सदस्य जनसब के हो तो भी।

श्री ओम सहता जनसब को हो तो भी, या आफिसर को भी स्पेयर नहीं करेंगे पूरी तरह से जाच कराएंगे। इनने आलावा भी अगर मालूम हुआ कि कोई और आफिसर भी कनाइव कर रहे थे जिन्होंने काटकटर के साथ सब-स्टैंडर्ड मैटियरल यूज कराया है, उनको भी नहीं छोड़ेंगे और दण्ड दिलाने की पूरी कोशिश करेंगे और दण्ड देंगे।

जोशी जी ने चीफ़ टेक्निकल एक्जामिनेर का जिक्र किया—चीफ़ टेक्निकल एक्जामिनेर सेंट्रल विजिलेंस के हैं और उन्होंने कोई ओ० के० रिपोर्ट नहीं दी है।

[श्री श्रीम मेहता]

मैंने पहले भी बताया है कि दो साल से यह किर्क नहीं बन रहा था, इसका काम अप्रैल, 1972 में शुरू किया गया था। अभी 11 महीने हुए हैं—इस दौरान हमारे आफिसर्स जो इसके साथ कनेक्टड हैं, वे बहा जाते रहे हैं और जो छोटी-मोटी कमियां नजर आती रहीं हैं, उसके लिए एक्शन लेते रहे हैं, ऐसा नहीं है कि एक्शन नहीं लिया गया।

इन्होंने यह भी कहा है कि इनके प्राइवेट कांटेक्ट्स भी थे—

I am concerned with government works; I am not concerned with a private contract, what sort of private contract he was engaged in and whether he was doing his job. How can I go into private contracts? I am concerned with government contracts and what he is doing in a government contract. I find he is a registered firm, class I contractor, and on the approved list of CPWD and the tender he quoted for this work was the lowest and so the work was awarded to him.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPA (Telli-cherry): I have gone through the statement very carefully. In the statement, it is said that on March 18, 1973, on information being received about some deficiencies in the execution of work, the technical officers of the Committee carried out excavation at the site and found that two piles of the retaining wall on the southern side of the bridge, which were to go to a depth of 3.5 metres had been left at 0.57 metre. Certain doubts are genuinely coming in the mind of a person.

The first is that which is referred to in another part of the statement, that payment has been made as if the work had been executed according to all specifications required by the CPWD or NDMC. I would like to know why

suddenly only now the Government thought of going into this matter, doing some excavation near one or two pillars, and who were the people who actually signed the report or the cheque or the completion certificate.

Here the statement also says that three engineers of the NDMC have been suspended. One the juniormost, has been arrested. It is good that the juniormost has been arrested. It is good that three people have been suspended. But why the seniors were not also arrested is a thing which somehow the Minister has not clarified, though he said that the police had to do it. But in a case like this where several crores of rupees are involved. it was a defraudment on the Government. These officials not only sanctioned the money but they signed it also. may be the engineers or may be the bureaucrats sitting above the engineers who are under the Ministry or under the Finance Ministry. I do not know the technical details. But there are some people who are responsible for the disbursement of money. I would like to know from the hon. Minister who were the officers who were directly involved in disbursing the money at that stage. It is said in the statement that money has been given as the thing was done properly. Who were responsible for that? I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether they have been booked; those people who were responsible for giving the certificate and disbursing the money and giving a clean chit to the contractor. Have they all been booked? Does the list include only three engineers or some more?

Another thing is this. When Mr. Panda was speaking, he asked what was the nature of the complaint that the Government has been receiving. I am not bothered whether the work began only at the beginning of this year or two years back. The Government says two years back. I am not concerned with it but it is also a fact that the representative had agreed that they have been receiving serious

complaints. What were the complaints that they had been receiving? Was it only about the deficiency which they have now found out, namely about two pillars which were found defective or was it about inadequate material which they have used in the construction or something else? We would like the Minister to give a little more detailed reply regarding the nature of the complaints, regarding the officials who were involved at the different stages of the work, etc. According to Press reports it is stated that the NDMC chief engineer is going to examine. I would like to know if this gentleman has descended from the heavens now. I think he is the person directly responsible for it. Was he sleeping all these years? Why has he not been suspended? I hope the Minister will say something about that.

SHRI OM MEHTA: About the Chief Engineer, he has taken over only a month back; so he has come into direct contact with this work only a month back; it is his first job to discover these deficiencies... (Interruptions). The earlier engineer had retired. The engineers who had been directly connected with this work have all been suspended: the municipal engineer who has made the payment, the junior engineer who makes the entries in the book where the record is kept which gives the clue to it and so all the three engineers who were connected with this work have been suspended. This was not a huge work; it was a contract for Rs. 56.75 lakhs and a particular set of engineers were responsible for this work, to make payment and supervision and also make entries there. It is not that those engineers who are responsible have not been suspended or that action has not been before this glorious Holi...

They asked: how we came to know about the two piles. It was through informer, informers who were working in this firm. They somehow knew it and informed our vigilance section that there was some deficiency in these two piles. Our Chief

Engineer and vigilance officers of the New Delhi Municipal Committee immediately went to the site and carried out excavations and found that these two piles were deficient. They were informed by the informants. The names are with the police because they are protected names and their names are not being divulged. On the clue of the informers the police went to the sub-contractor who was actually responsible for digging and they have also seized some incriminating documents. They found out that these two piles were not taken to the foundation as provided, that is 3.5 metres, which I have already stated in the statement.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPA: Apart from these engineers are there some top officials in his Ministry who are involved in the transaction? Secondly why should the retired man fly off and the Minister says: I am helpless.

SHRI OM MEHTA: Still the investigations are going on and if we find that he is also to be blamed, we will not allow him to fly.

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra): I am very glad that this thing has come to light. If I may be permitted to use a mixed metaphor: when thieves fall out, dog eats dog and the public stands to benefit as a result of it. I am surprised at the total non-technical nature of the statement that the Minister has chosen to make on this occasion. As my friend over there pointed out he has volunteered a small statement but the statement proceeds on the basis as if this was a routine matter in a routine discussion. First of all it says that Dewan Suraj Prakash Chopra and Sons have been entrusted by the New Delhi Municipal Committee to carry out work on construction of an overbridge on Mehrauli Road. I believe, in one of the replies he gave, he said that it was because it was the lowest tender. I should like to know, I want to go into further details about how Mr. Chopra's tender became the lowest

[Shri Piloo Modi]

tender Perhaps my hon friend the Minister might choose to enlighten us, how this tender became the lowest tender on this particular job

There is something quite revealing in here, it says "On receipt of information on March 18, 1973 about some deficiencies in the execution of the work " Information from whom" It is amazing that on information that was received as late as March 18, 1973, was acted upon the night between 18th and 19th March, 1973 when complaint was lodged with the police This is the fastest piece of investigation that I have ever seen carried out by the Government barring that one very spectacular case of Nagarwala I can see shades of Nagarwala throughout this entire incident because within 24 hours, not even that—I assume—that the complaint was received during office hours, it must have been received at about 10 or 11 O'clock in the morning

(An Hon Member It was B.C.)

That makes it even more intriguing The entire Government of India suspended playing Holi on that day to receive this complaint, an anonymous complaint that just happened to be arriving at the NDMC office and that some night all the investigations were carried out and a report was lodged by the Chief Engineer of the NDMC—he was also working that day—with the police station Defence Colony, on the night of March 18-19 1973 This is something that I must commend the Government for Government I find can work with admirable zeal when its own interests or the interests of its participants are involved

AN HON MEMBER So what?

SHRI PILOO MODY I am in the process of explaining It just happens that on March the 22nd, just one day before this glorious Holi

AN HON MEMBER What paper are you reading?

SHRI PILOO MODY. I quote from *Motherland* (Interruption).. because

Patriot will not publish or print it, and I have to quote from *Motherland* because this is my mother land and their motherland which is involved.. *Motherland*, just a day before the Holi, published an article under the heading 'Contractor, son held in Safdarjung Rlyover Case', and I want to establish its relevancy here To eliminate all suspicion of irrelevancy, the article ends by saying that it may be recalled that the Chopras were also contractors of a famous firm in Haryana, which I will not mention, because I do not want my hon friends over there to jump up with the precision of a circus, which is manufacturing some small thing, I am sorry some small objects at a plant of some youngster, as this paper has made out It adds that sometime last year however this famous company abruptly cancelled their contract with this contractor when the construction job was half-way through It concludes that the Chopras showed rare audacity to file a damage suit against this young man's firm claiming more than rupees five lakhs as losses and that the case is pending in a civil court

So, I find that the remarkable zeal with which the Government has acted has to be commended I commended it earlier on too It has a certain connection with this press report which I have also put before the House

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER That appears to be more of your imagination This has no relevancy

SHRI PILOO MODY I would not like my imagination to be tampered with your imagination If I see the connection I see it and there is nothing that changes my imagination or somebody else's imagination

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER I would not exchange my imagination with yours

SHRI PILOO MODY Now, Sir, there is another thing which surprises me This is purely a technical matter I do not know whether the Minister

or the Engineers who have drafted this report or those involved in the construction of this fly-over know what a pile is. I cannot imagine that a column, 57 metre deep can be called a pile at all. Even a 3.5 metre column is a very dubious pile, because piles normally go much deeper than 50 or 60 feet, even 200 feet. A pile is a particular column under the ground which helps hold up the building or a structure. I cannot understand how a pile 1½ feet deep would function. The pile would never function because, by its very nature, it develops friction over the side which holds thing up or hits the solid rock at the bottom. But, if the solid rock at the bottom is only 1½ feet, then I am afraid, this is a very unsound design. The pile under it supports the structure. I hope that now you will not relegate me to my imagination.

Therefore, for somebody to come before the House and to say that they found the pile only .57 metre below, to me it immediately appears suspicious, because I feel that this is a planted story. I read a similar story in a newspaper. When I read a report like that in the press and when I see a responsible Minister coming and making a responsible statement that a pile 1½ feet below was discovered, I began to get suspicious. I want to know within the short period of time how is it possible for this genius of a technical officer of the committee—I have had some dealings with this committee and believe me, all the geniuses of the world are farthest from this committee—how is it possible for this genius to find out within the same day, which was Holi, this particular pile? Piles are underground and you cannot see them. They are covered up as soon as the foundations are laid. Here the entire superstructure is finished. How did they find that pile which was missing unless somebody got them by the nose or the ear and led them to that particular pile? Whoever led them to that particular

pile was conniving in the making of that pile. So, not only is the informer partially guilty but also the informant.

What is said about contractors is all very true. In fact, they do not even know half of what the contractors are capable of doing. (Interruption). I have not been a contractor any more than you have been a lawyer, because

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MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: This will not go on record.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Believe me, it is parliamentary. You can check up.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now put your question.

SHRI PILOO MODY: I want those who colluded and connived with the purpose of making illegal money, evading taxes and ploughing it all back into their political future.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What is your question? You have taken almost 20 minutes.

SHRI PILOO MODY: That is because I have the most to say. I would like to know from the Minister whether he has read this report in the *Motherland* or not. I would also like to know from the Minister which is the company which has been mentioned in this report and who is the owner of that company, which is also mentioned in the report.

Finally, I would like to know, is this merely being stage-managed—this entire enquiry—or is there any substance in it—because the same N.D.M.C. will draw the blood out of you and take a year or two to give you a permit to build a house—how can the same N.D.M.C. conduct an enquiry in this period of time? The whole proposition is ridiculous. That is why I want to know whether the entire thing has been trumped up

**Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

[Shri Piloo Modi]

with only one purpose and that is that Sanjay Gandhi is angry with this contractor?. . (Interruptions)

SHRI B. P MAURYA On a point of order, Sir This last portion has nothing to do with the calling attention (Interruptions)

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER He has thrown something in the form of a question at the last moment Why don't you give the Minister a chance to refute it, saying that it is entirely baseless? Let him say that and that should be enough

SHRI OM MEHTA I strongly refute the insinuations made by my hon friend Shri Piloo Mody because not urg is trumped up here

He stated that the tender of Messrs Dewant Suraj Prakash Chopra & Sons was not the lowest I will give the figures of the tenders received Messrs Dewan Suraj Prakash Chopra and Sons tendered Rs 50,23,000 Messrs Amarnath Charanji Lal Pvt Ltd tendered Rs 58,46,000 and the figure of Messrs Simplex Concrete Piles Pvt Ltd was Rs 62,05 000 You will find from these figures that the quotation of Messrs Dewan Suraj Prakash Chopra & Sons was the lowest

Then he asked how the whole thing was discovered on 18th March 1973 I have already said that the Vigilance Officer received a complaint from some informers, who were employees in that company

SHRI PILOO MODY Sanjay was employed by them?

SHRI B P MAURYA This is how they are protecting the culprits (Interruptions)

SHRI OM MEHTA: He received information that payment has been claimed for 240 piles existing under

the ground for a particular depth though two of them were not of that depth. He passed on this information to the Chief Engineer, NDMC He ordered a joint inspection of the site by a team of officers of the NDMC, and the contracting firm was also associated with the inspection The sites of the piles were excavated on 18th March, 1973 and it was found that the piles went to a depth of 0.57 metres instead of 3.5 metres The note of inspection is with me and Sir, if you want, I can read it The joint inspection team consisted of Shri S L Malik Municipal Engineer, Shri C. M Pruthi and one of the assistant engineers who has been suspended (the police is after him for arrest), Shri V Prakash Chetal Chief Engineer, Shri G Bhambani, Vigilance Officer and Shri S K Jam, Assistant Engineer The representatives of the contractor, Shri Suresh Chopra Son and Partners, Shri Bindu, site supervisor and Shri Chabra engineer, refused to sign the note When they refused to sign the note, there was no way out but to register a case with the police so that afterwards they might not deny the whole thing So, we did not lose any time We immediately went to the police and registered a case against him Instead of giving credit to us for prompt action, they are trying to find fault with us and are protecting the contractors (Interruptions)

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER Nothing of what Dr Kalidas says would go on record

SHRI OM MEHTA All the specifications for this bridge were seen and vetted by the Bridge Section of the Transport Ministry They were also associated from the very beginning, when the tender was received and when the work was allotted They were always kept in the picture

I again repeat that we would not allow anybody to connive at it