

Foreign Exchange released under the Foreign Travel Scheme

*172. SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to lay a statement showing :

(a) the quantum of foreign exchange released under Foreign Travel Scheme during 1978-79 and 1979-80;

(b) whether any case of misuse have been reported and if so, how many such cases are pending in this regard; and

(c) is there any proposal to raise the limit of 500 Dollars under this Foreign Travel Scheme ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) The number of persons who travelled under the Foreign Travel Scheme (FTS) is as below :

1978-79	66,715
1979-80	56,780

Since a number of them do not avail of full release of US \$ 500, the Reserve Bank of India do not have ready information on the quantum of actual foreign exchange released.

(b) No case of misuse of FTS has so far been brought to the notice of Government.

(c) No Sir.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry for passing comments. If you go through the first part of my question I had asked for the quantum of foreign exchange released under Foreign Travel Scheme during 1978-79 and 1979-80 and not the persons who actually travelled. I do not know why the hon'ble Minister is giving such an answer. Sir, since release of foreign exchange under Foreign Travel Scheme is going on drying up our exchange reserves, I wonder how on such a vital matter the Reserve Bank of India is not in a position to tell us how much foreign exchange dried out as a result of this scheme. I would request the hon. Minister to kindly place the entire information about the quantum of foreign exchange released under Foreign Travel Scheme.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Sir, the Reserve Bank of India will have to go round collecting this information which I thought was not of much value. What

we usually do is that we take the number of persons going abroad and multiply it by 500 and then arrive at the figure. If anything turns on that I will get the information.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Sir, the second part of my question is about rethinking to raise the limit of 500 Dollars under this Scheme? The Janata government just raised it from 100 Dollars to 500 Dollars. When on account of this scheme our foreign exchange reserves are being dried up, will the hon'ble Minister not think of reducing it from 500 Dollars to 100 Dollars? Will the government not think of restoring the earlier position?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: If the hon. Members' suggestion is that in the interest of conserving foreign exchange we should reduce the amount of allowance of 500 Dollars then the object can be better served by means other than that. Sir, you must give enough to a person who goes abroad. You cannot expect him to live abroad on a paltry sum. Therefore, if the Government thinks that the amount should be reduced it should think of other means than reducing the amount.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reports reveal that during the Janata government regime of two and a half years the foreign exchange reserves have been misused, abused and squandered. I would like to know if there is any such information and whether the hon. Minister will find out and make an enquiry and inform the House as to how much foreign exchange reserves have been squandered, misused and abused? Will the hon. Minister agree for a probe? He himself referred to this in his budget speech last year.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Sir, I have no information that foreign exchange has been squandered or abused in respect of the Foreign Travel Scheme. Whether there has been any abuse or squandering of the foreign exchange as such is a matter which will be debated in the Budget.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: Sir, whatever else the Janata government might have done, they did one good thing of raising the limit from 100 Dollars to 500 Dollars. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is going to further raise it from Dollar 500 to Dollar 1000?

Sir, as you know a hair-cut abroad costs Rs. 40 to Rs. 60. A cup of coffee costs Rs. 15 to Rs. 30. Actually our people have to borrow from others with the result the amount of money that comes to our country from abroad gets reduced. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you, have also been abroad and you know...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: But I did not borrow from anybody.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Sir, I do not propose to make any change in the allocation for the Foreign Travel Scheme and if the hon'ble Member's suggestion is that a hair-cut costs Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 I would advise him to take the hair-cut and then go abroad.

Boeing 707 belonging to A.I. outlived Economic utility

*173. SHRI RASHEED MASOOD :
SHRI CHHANGUR RAM :

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) how many out of the total number of Boeing 707 aircraft with Air India have outlived their economic utility stating the extent to which their operational cost had increased during the last one year; and

(b) the programme, if any, formulated by Government to replace the ageing aircraft stating the financial implications involved and the period likely to be taken in their replacement ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A.P. SHARMA) (a) Out of the Nine Boeing-707 type aircraft with Air-India, four are B-707-437 type which have accumulated high hours of service life and hence are prone to frequent maintenance involving prolonged unscheduled groundings. Two of these four aircraft have been phased out in April/July 1980 and two more are expected to be withdrawn from service by April, 1982.

The extent of increase in the cost of operations of these four aircraft only is not separately available; but for the entire Boeing 707 fleet of Air-India, the overall increase was 25.37% in 1980-81 as compared to the operational cost in 1979-80.

(b) Aircraft evaluation studies for gradual replacement of B-707 fleet of Air-India have been conducted and the economic and financial implications are under study. The type of new aircraft for replacement is also under study. The period likely to be taken for replacement

will ultimately depend on the substitute aircraft to be finally selected.

श्री रशीद मसूद: डिप्टी स्पीकर साहब, जब इंडियन एयर लाइन्स और एयर इंडिया का मनेजमेंट एक था, उस वक्त क्या सरकार ने कोई कमेटी स्टडी करने के लिए मुकर्रर की थी कि इन जहाजों को रिप्लेस किया जाए और किन हवाई जहाजों से रिप्लेस किया जाय ? अगर की थी तो उस की क्या रिपोर्ट आई और उस पर अब तक अमल क्यों नहीं किया गया ?

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स्पिकर صاحب, जब इंडियन एयर लाइन्स और एयर इंडिया का मनेजमेंट एक था, उस वक्त क्या सरकार ने कोई कमेटी स्टडी करने के लिए मुकर्रर की थी कि इन जहाजों को रिप्लेस किया जाए और किन हवाई जहाजों से रिप्लेस किया जाय ? अगर की थी तो उस की क्या रिपोर्ट आई और उस पर अब तक अमल क्यों नहीं किया गया ?

श्री अनन्त प्रसाद शर्मा : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह प्रश्न है बोइंग 707 के रिप्लेसमेंट का। इसलिए इंडियन एयर लाइन्स और एयर इंडिया की कोई कमेटी बनी हो इस बात को देखने के लिये कि कितने इसमें रिप्लेस किए जाएं, कितने न किए जायें—इस संबंध में मैं इस वक्त कुछ नहीं कह सकता हूँ। (अवधान) 707 के रिप्लेसमेंट के लिए और उस के बदले में किस टाइप का जहाज हम लें—उसके लिए जरूर एक कमेटी बनी है उस कमेटी की जो रिपोर्ट है, वह दो तीन महीने में सरकार के पास आ जाएगी।

श्री रशीद मसूद: 707 के रिप्लेसमेंट के लिए एक कमेटी बनी थी जब कि कंबाइंड