

Construction of Mansion by Ex-Prime Minister

*108. **SHRI HARI VISHNU KAMATH:** Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to reports appearing in the Press that the former Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi is building a mansion near Mehrauli, estimated to cost nearly 50 lakhs of rupees;

(b) whether the said reports are correct; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to inquire as to how she came to possess such assets disproportionate to her income over the years?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT): (a) and (b). A farm house, with a covered area of 146.4 sq. meters on the ground floor and 121.5 sq. meters in the basement, is being constructed by the former Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi in her farm in village Sultanpur, near Mehrauli. The building plans of the house were sanctioned by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in December, 1975.

(c) As the Government have no information on the likely cost of construction, the question of holding any inquiry does not arise.

SHRI HARI VISHNU KAMATH: I would like to know how much land was allotted for the building of this house and at what price? Has there been large-scale deviation from the blueprint of the plan in respect of subterranean vaults and swimming pool, etc.?

SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT: The land was not allotted. It was bought by her in a private deal and the area is 4.3 acres.

SHRI HARI VISHNU KAMATH: Am I to understand that farm land is being used for house-building?

SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT: Sir, small farm houses with certain specifications are permitted to be constructed.

SHRI HARI VISHNU KAMATH: Is the Minister in a position to assure the House that in case there has been a large scale deviation from the blueprint by providing underground vaults and swimming pool he will inquire into the matter?

SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT: No deviations have been brought to our notice upto now. If they are brought to our notice we will take action.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Is the hon'ble Minister aware that a feeling is growing amongst the public in this country that this government is very soft towards the ex-Prime Minister on this matter. It is the duty of the government that whenever an allegation of corruption is made against the ex-Prime Minister it should be enquired into. Government must realise this. If the government is satisfied that the ex-Prime Minister is in possession of assets far in excess of her earning capacity then the government must institute proper proceedings.

SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT: Sir, what has the feeling to do with this question.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): I should like to say that one should not get excited in such matters and if the question relates to the former Prime Minister one should be more careful. Nobody should give any cause for feeling that we are out to prosecute anybody or pursue anybody. That should not be the idea anywhere. If anybody wants an enquiry, let him first furnish the evidence to us. Without evidence government is not going to act on any allegations.