

LOK SABHA

Monday, December 8, 1969 | Agrahayana 17,
1891 (Saka)

— — —

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Food and Agriculture Minister's Connection
with various Organisations

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- *451. SHRI PILOO MODY :
SHRI G. C. NAIK :
SHRI R. K. AMIN :
SHRI MAHENDRA MAJHI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of various companies, organisations, trusts and Hindu Joint Families with which the Union Food and Agriculture Minister Shri Jagjivan Ram is connected directly or indirectly ;

(b) the details of earnings of all these organisations during the last three years ; and

(c) the details of Income-tax paid by these organisations on their earnings during the corresponding period ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. C. SETHI) : (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library. See No LT-2275/69].

SHRI PILOO MODY : I have seen the statement the Minister has taken so much time to lay on the Table and I am constrained to note that it gives no information whatsoever, except perhaps a brief biodata of the life and times of Mr. Jagjivan Ram. If you will look into the record of what happened last time when this question came up, you

will find that a request was made to find out how much earnings were made by each one of these organisations and what taxes had been paid by them. But this statement is merely a list of organisations in which it says Mr. Jagjivan Ram was President, Adviser, Patron, Patron-in-Chief and God knows what else.

I do not think we can proceed with this question, because there is a complete lack of information on any of the points on which information was requested. I would like to draw attention to the record of last week, in which I had said that if the information was not forthcoming, we would be constrained to make insinuations. And, the Prime Minister gets very upset when we make these insinuations. Therefore, I do not want to make them. But without the information, we cannot proceed with the question.

SHRI SHASHI BHUSHAN : Is it a debate or a question.

श्री इसहाक सम्मली : अगर इसी तरीके से स्पीच दी गयी तो क्वेश्चन ओवर में दो, तीन ही हो पायेंगी ।

[اے-سابقہ سٹیٹمنٹ، اگر اس طریقے سے اسپیکر کی اس تقریر سے اسپیکر کو کوئی چیز اور پریس دو-تین
ہو کر پائیگی۔]

श्री रवि राय : अध्यक्ष महोदय, आप उन्हें मौका दीजिये । वह अपना क्वेश्चन फारमुलेट कर रहे हैं ।

SHRI PILOO MODY : The propose of what I said is quite clear. I maintain that parts (b) and (c) have not been replied to and therefore, I cannot ask any supplementaries. If you look into the record, you will find that you yourself requested the Minister to collect information on parts (b) and (c). Now, if the Minister has disobeyed your instructions, I suggest you take him to task and deal with him in any manner you think fit, but certainly I do not want to be

told that I must ask supplementaries in a vacuum.

MR. SPEAKER : Previously it was agreed to have a debate on the subject-matter of part (c) and they would be laying the information before the House that day. So far as this question today is concerned, some information has been laid on the Table of the House. The full reply to this question, as already agreed to will be laid on Friday and the discussion will follow.

SHRI PILOO MODY : Which Friday ?

MR. SPEAKER : Coming Friday, the 12th. (*Interruptions*). You were not aware of the background of the whole question. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PILOO MODY : Friday will not be convenient for me. (*Interruptions*) I am not interested in the discussion. I am interested in my question.

SHRI P. C. SETHI : This question relates to the income and expenditure and also the income-tax assessments of the various institutions with which the hon Minister is connected. The other day during the course of the answers I have indicated the difficulties that these institutions are situated far and wide and it will take time to collect the information. However, I may point out for the information of the House that very day we wrote to the Commissioners of Income-tax, the respective organisations and trusts and Registrars of Societies and we asked them to send information on those subjects. Unfortunately, we have got information only from some, which I have indicated in the statement that I laid on the Table.

SHRI PILOO MODY : It is not in the statement.

SHRI P. C. SETHI : That very day Shri Ranga pointed out that as long as he is connected as Patron or Chief Patron, it is not very necessary to go into those details. So, in the main body of the statement I have pointed out that Shri Jagjivan Ram is connected with about 18 institutions as Patron or Patron in Chief. I have also stated that two of these institution, namely, 14 and 34, have closed down. I have also stated that

four of them, namely, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Jawarlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Memorial Trust and Vishwa Ahimsa Sangh are exempt from income-tax under section 11. Then, some of them are in the formative stage. In spite of our best efforts we could not get details of income and returns of these institutions. As far as the debate on Friday is concerned,

SHRI PILOO MODY : Let him not mix up the two questions. I have nothing to do with the debate. This is question hour and he should reply to my question. If he wants a discussion, let him have it after 12 O'Clock, when the question hour is over.

SHRI P. C. SETHI : It is very necessary to make a reference to the debate on Friday because, Sir, you have referred to it. As far as that debate is concerned, that relates mainly to the income-tax returns filed by Shri Jagjivan Ram. So, the Friday debate is not related to these institutions as such.

SHRI PILOO MODY : This question has nothing to do with his personal income-tax. This relates to public funds.

THE PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF FINANCE, MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND MINISTER OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI) : That is what the Minister has stated.

MR. SPEAKER : What is the point of the hon. Member ?

SHRI PILOO MODY : I want information in respect of parts (b) and (c) of my question. The Minister has just now stated that he has received some replies. Even those replies he has not included in his statement. So, I request you, Sir, to postpone this question once again till he come back with the information required by parts (b) and (c) of the question. There is nothing but verbiage in his reply and he has refused to give any information. Let him do his home work and come back to the House well prepared

SHRI D. N. PATODIA : When this question was postponed 15 days back the Minister gave a specific assurance that he

will not take more than 15 days to supply the information. Even during this period he has not been able to collect the information. So, Sir, I would request you to get a categorical explanation from the Minister for not obtaining the information. It is not enough to say that the departments concerned did not reply. It was his job to collect the information. How long can we wait? It is more than one month. The notice was given five weeks ago. He could not get information even in five weeks' time?

SHRI SEZHIYAN : Let them lay on the Table whatever information they have got.

SHRI P. C. SETHI : I have stated that the total number of institutions is 42.

MR. SPEAKER : That is given in the written statement.

SHRI PILOO MODY : I want replies to (b) and (c), the second and third letters of the alphabets: Perhaps, he has not gone that far yet.

SHRI P. C. SETHI : Whatever information we have received so far I have placed before the House in the form of a statement.

SHRI PILOO MODY : He comes before the House and says that he has not received replies from those people. Are the income-tax people going to write to him that Shri Jagjivan Ram is the patron in chief.

SHRI SHEO NARAIN : It is a very simply question. What action have they taken against the erring officials? If he has asked for information and they did not supply it, did he take their explanation and departmental action against them?

SHRI PILOO MODY : Here is Shri Sethi on page 3092 of the record :

"With regard to part (b) of the question, we shall have to address our letters to the various institutions themselves,"—

has he done it?

"and it is not in our hands to bind them down to send their replies within a week or two, because it will depend upon them."

to which I said :

"Surely, if Shri Jagjivan Ram is the Patron, they will take the trouble of replying to the Patron."

Then, Shri Sethi said :

"As far as part (c) is concerned, to the extent possible, we would address letters to our income-tax commissioners and find out the position."

This has to do with parts (b) and (c). What he has given in his statement is only about part (a) . . . (*Interruptions*). It may pass muster with your intelligence ; it does not with mine.

SHRI P. C. SETHI : I am very thankful to the hon. Member for putting the record straight. He has quoted what I said that day. After that day when I said that we would address letters to the various organisations, we sent telegrams to the income-tax commissioners and sent telegrams and letters to the Registrars of Societies. All this we have done. I had also said that we could not bind down most of these institutions . . . (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PILOO MODY : What about the reply?

SHRI P. C. SETHI : Whatever information we have received as yet from them, I have put it in the statement.

SHRI PILOO MODY : No. Where is the statement? You give me your copy.

SHRI P. C. SETHI : It is in the statement that I have given today.

SHRI PILOO MODY : There is no information on parts (b) and (c).

SHRI P. C. SETHI : But I have not got them (*Interruption*)

SHRI PILOO MODY : I think, there is a deliberate attempt to mislead the House. The replies that we have demanded come under parts (b) and (c) and the reply in the statement only deals with part (a). For him to say that he has given those replies in his statement is a categorical lie.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I am sorry that the hon. Member is getting so excited.

SHRI PILOO MODY : I have still more in reserve.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I would like to read out exactly what has been said in the statement. Item (b), which is being shouted about so much says :-

“the details of earning of all these organisations during the last three years;” and (c) “the details of Income-tax paid by these organisations on their earnings during the corresponding period ?”

Since the hon. Member, Shri Ranga, said that we may not bother about those organisations of which he is the patron, or patron-in-chief or founder patron or chief patron, we left those out. Out of the remaining, two, Nos 14 and 34 in the list, have closed down—the first about four or five years ago and the second in August, 1967.

SHRI PILOO MODY ; It will be interesting to know, why.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : About the first, nevertheless, we tried to pursue the matter but we cannot even trace the founder-member or anything about the institution. The second also has closed down. If an institution has closed down, it is very difficult to trace the persons concerned. We can certainly continue the inquiry if hon. Member so desire.

Three of the institutions, Nos. 26, 28 and 31 of the list, are still in their formative stage ; that is, they have not yet come to the stage where they are earning or are liable to income-tax. As far as I can make out from the replies, No. 31 has come into existence only on 25th November, 1969. Obviously, during this period it has neither earned money, nor paid any income-tax. Some others are in the process of being formed. Others have not replied. It is, I think, very unfair of the hon. Member to say that we are trying to mislead the House. *(Interruption)*. Whatever information we were able to gather, we have put before the House. As the Minister has said, letters have gone, telegrams have gone and telephonic inquiries have also been made.

SHRI RANGA : When the information comes, with you please place it on the Table of the House ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : When it comes, certainly it can be placed.

SHRI KANWAR LAL GUPTA : The Minister has said that some replies have been received.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : We have given whatever replies have been received *..... (Interruption)*

SHRI S. K. TAPURIAH : Have they tried to find out from the Registrar of Societies ?

MR. SPEAKER : You can ask supplementaries on the basis of whatever is before you. The rest of the information will be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI PILOO MODY : Using the same persuasive tone of the Prime Minister, I would like to say that it is not enough—Rangaji may have said that if he is only patron, we may not be interested in the figures. The Question, as it stands, is quite categorical and, I think, what we should have had was a tabulation of the companies with the incomes that they have earned and the taxes that they have paid. I would request the hon. Minister that there is no hurry about it...

SHRI SHASHI BHUSHAN : On a point of order, Sir. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PILOO MODY : I do not want any advocacy of Mr. Shashi Bhushan. I am quite capable of dealing with him without his help.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Shashi Bhushan, what is your objection ? The question is being replied to by your Minister.

SHRI PILOO MODY : There is no great hurry or haste about this information. Whenever the Minister receives it and, I hope, he will receive it in this session, I would like him to place it on Table of the House and let the Question come back again.

MR. SPEAKER : No need of futher supplementaries ; I now pass on the next Question.

SHRI PILOO MODY : With the assurance that they will give the information.

श्री रवि राय : अध्यक्ष महोदय, क्या आप ने इस सवाल को दुबारा स्थगित कर दिया है ? आप के एलान को मैं समझ नहीं पाया ।

MR. SPEAKER : The information will be laid on the Table of the House when it is received by them.

SHRI PILOO MODY : After which the same Question will be tabled again (*Interruption*)

MR. SPEAKER : Yes ; it will be tabled.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : May I clarify one point ? Mr. Piloo Mody will please listen carefully. May I submit that the replies received are the ones mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the statement there ? What we have got are those replies only...

SHRI PILOO MODY : You write to them again.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : About these organisations, I would like to remind the hon. Member that these are entirely non-official and private organisations. They are not under any kind of Government control.

SHRI PILOO MODY : I want to know how much they have earned and how much taxes they have paid.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : It is only when they reply that we can know.

MR. SPEAKER : I think, there has been enough discussion on it. When the information is received, it will be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI PILOO MODY : And the question will be re-asked.

MR. SPEAKER : Next Question.

SHRI R. K. AMIN : I am a signatory to this Question. My name is in the list.

MR. SPEAKER : Still you want to put a supplementary after all this ?

SHRI R. K. AMIN : I would draw the attention of the hon Minister to item No. 36, the Bharat Krishak Samaj of which Mr. Jagjivan Ram is the President. I want to know whether there is anybody who is blacklisted by the Government and who is associated with the Bharat Krishak Samaj in an executive position.

MR. SPEAKER : You put a specific question about it.

SHRI RANGA : It is a very relevant question. It is the President of the Bharat Krishak Samaj.

MR. SPEAKER : He must have some notice... (*Interruption*);

SHRI RANGA : It is very relevant question.

MR. SPEAKER : The Question, as it is, reads as follows :

“(a) the details of various companies, organisations, trusts and Hindu Joint Families with which the Union Food and Agriculture Minister Shri Jagjivan Ram is connected directly or indirectly :

(b) the details of earnings of all these organisations during the last three years ;”

Now, you are asking about an individual who is blacklisted. How does that arise ? You give notice of a specific Question and I will admit it.

SHRI R. K. AMIN : The man is associated with the Bharat Krishak Samaj and he is in an executive position. He is himself blacklisted. He has not paid the tax. He is not likely to pay the tax of the organisation also.

MR. SPEAKER : You may ask a separate Question.

AN HON. MEMBER : He is not blacklisted.

SHRI R. K. AMIN : Mr. Wahi is a member of the Bharat Krishak Samaj... (*Interruptions*)

श्री शशि भूषण : अध्यक्ष महोदय, ब्लैक रिस्टिड शब्द को हटाया जाना चाहिये ।

SHRI SHEO NARAIN : How are four members standing at the same time, Sir ?

SHRI R. K. AMIN : I want to know whether Mr. Wahi who is connected with the Bharat Krishak Samaj...

MR. SPEAKER : That question does not arise out of this.

SHRI P. K. DEO : Will you permit a short notice question on this, Sir ?

SHRI R. K. AMIN : Shri Jagjiwan Ram is here. He can give answer to this question I have asked.

MR. SPEAKER : How can the question about an individual arise ?

SHRI MAHENDRA MAJHI : Under whose authority huge amounts were transferred to the WAF Memorial Trust ?

SHRI P. C. SETHI : In 1964 Bharat Krishak Samaj. Constituted a Trust and registered it under the name of World Agricultural Fair Memorial Farmers' Welfare Trust society. From this trust a sum of Rs. 9.83 lakhs was transferred in 1964. May I also add for the information of the House that as far as the President of the Bharat Krishak Samaj is concerned, Shri Jagjiwan Ram became President of this society only in 1968.

SHRI PILOO MODY : Who was the President before that ?

SHRI P. C. SETHI : As far as the accounts of Bharat Krishak Samaj, etc., are concerned, that is the function of the Chairman and the President has nothing to do with it.

SHRI RANGA : He was then Food and Agriculture Minister. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA : This is a very relevant question that has been posed to the Finance Ministry. The question is with regard to the earnings of all these organisations. During the last 3 years has any income tax been collected. When the former Deputy Prime Minister was the Finance Minister, he instructed his officers to collect such taxes. If not, why has he

suppressed such things ? Therefore, this is a question of not only Mr. Jagjiwan Ram but also the ex-Deputy Prime Minister. Strong and strict action should be taken. What is the answer of the Minister ?

SHRI SHEO NARAIN : How are you allowing this, Sir ? (*Interruptions*) Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari will reply.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA This is my right, Sir. Let the Prime Minister give a categorical reply to my question.

श्री मोल्लू प्रसाद : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मशीन काम नहीं कर रही है ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : अध्यक्ष क्या करे ? मैं आपकी मशीन ठीक करने वहाँ आऊँ ? थोड़ी सी डिगनिटी रखा करें हाउस में ।

SHRI P. C. SETHI : I don't have the detailed information about the former Deputy Prime Minister's order on this particular point. But as far as the particular cases of income-tax are concerned, the Minister or the Board cannot issue any instructions as such in specific cases. The Minister or Ministry can issue general instructions. But they cannot issue instruction in a particular case, to be decided in a particular manner.

AN HON. MEMBER : We want a discussion for half-an-hour on this.

MR. SPEAKER : Half-an-hour discussion, I am not allowing. (*Interruptions*) I am very sorry ; I cannot allow any more questions.

SHRI PILOO MODY : We will come back to this when the statement is laid. When he lays a statement, the question will come up again, Sir.

श्री रवि राय : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस सिलसिले में आपका रुलिंग क्या है ? आपने पहले यह कहा था कि यह सवाल दुबारा आएगा । फिर प्रधान मंत्री ने इंटरवीन किया । इसके बाद आपका फैसला क्या हुआ ?

MR. SPEAKER : श्री आपकी तसल्ली

नहीं हुई है ? When the reply comes, that will be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI PILOO MODY : I want to ask a supplementary. We should be given an opportunity to ask supplementary questions on the statement.

MR. SPEAKER : Next Question.

SHRI PILOO MODY : The Prime Minister is merely shaking her head. Lakhs of rupees disappear. She simply moves her head... (*Interruption*)

SHRI P. C. SETHI : May I know with how many clubs Mr. Piloo Mody is associated and does he know how many have paid income-tax ? (*Interruption*)

SHRI SHEO NARAIN—*rose (Interruption)* You are the Finance Minister. You should know all this.

SHRI PILOO MODY : It is simply a white-wash—nothing but that.

MR. SPEAKER : Next Question.

Long-Term Plan for Oil Exploration in India by the Soviet Union

†

*452. SHRI A. SREEDHARAN :

SHRI S. M. KRISHNA :

SHRI P. VISWAMBHARAN :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND MINES AND METALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has asked the Soviet Union to prepare a long-term plan for oil exploration in India ;

(b) whether such a plan was given to India by any other country ; and

(c) if so, the reasons for asking the Soviet Union to prepare this plan, when Government had already in their possession a plan for the exploration of oil in India ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND MINES AND METALS (SHRI D. R. CHAVAN) : (a) Government have sought expert assistance from Soviet Union to help ONGC

(i) in making a rapid assessment of

the Oil and Gas potential on the basis of the geological and geo-physical data of the various sedimentary areas, on-shore and off-shore and by re-interpretation of these data.

(ii) to determine the priorities, the ratio of efforts to be devoted towards exploration and production in these areas, the necessary methods to accomplish these and

(iii) to assess the magnitude of resources (finance, manpower and equipment), needed to accomplish these.

The matter was discussed with the Soviet authorities at Moscow recently. Their views on the scope of the study have now been received.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRI A. SREEDHARAN : It has become a habit with this Government to rush to the Soviet Union at the slightest provocation I want to know whether such a plan was given to India by any other country ? I want to know this. Before rushing to the Soviet Union for expertise and help did this Government contact any other country, and if not, why not ?

SHRI D. R. CHAVAN : No, no other country was contacted.

SOME HON. MEMBERS : Why ?

SHRI D. R. CHAVAN : Let hon. Members have patience. Let me complete my reply.

SHRI PILOO MODY : What we need is not patience but tolerance.

SHRI D. R. CHAVAN : No other country was contacted in this connection. A tentative ten-year plan had been drawn up by the ONGC in which a programme was drawn for the purpose of exploration and production of oil for a period of ten years and the amount that was necessary for this effort was also mentioned in it. Therefore, it was actually done by us.

The reply to the question is that we are taking some assistance from the Soviet technical experts in the matter of making a