

MR. SPEAKER : Enough time was given. No more time for this question. Mr. Vijayaraghavan.

(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : It has taken twenty minutes.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Will you please allow Half-an-Hour discussion ?

MR. SPEAKER : I never promise anything which I cannot do.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Are you going to allow Call Attention on this ?

MR. SPEAKER : No.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Half-an-hour discussion may be allowed.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : The Prime Minister spent hours on this very issue.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Do not ask me. Do not provoke me to do something which I do not like to do.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing more. I am not allowing.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You have a right to say, and I have a right to decide. I will not allow you now.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Vijayaraghavan.

Alleged corrupt practices of customs officials at airports

*495. SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Indian workers and others working abroad often make complaints about the undesirable practices of customs staff posted at various airports in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Government have investigated these complaints;

(c) if so, the total number of persons found guilty during the last three years with airport-wise break-up;

(d) whether there is any mechanism to keep a watch on their income and assets; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) to (e). A statement is given below.

Statement

(a) and (b). Complaints have occasionally been received from passengers regarding uncalled-for seizure/detention, demand for illegal gratification, harassment and over-assessment of duty. Such complaints are always investigated and appropriate action taken, wherever called for.

(c) Number of cases where action has been initiated during the last three years is as below :

	1984	1985	1986
Bombay Airport	2	1	2
Delhi Airport	4
Madras Airport	—	...	2
Trivandrum Airport	2
Calcutta Airport	...	2	...

(d) and (e). Annual property returns filed by the officers in Group 'A' and Group 'B' are monitored and scrutinised. In the case of officers of doubtful integrity, the vigilance and intelligence units in the Custom Houses and the Central Bureau of Investigation maintain watch on their conduct.

SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : Sir, harassment of passengers by the Customs officers particularly at the Bombay Airport and Trivandrum airport is an every day occurrence. It is well known to every one. The general feeling is that often the guilty persons are not punished. There are organised rackets in these airports. Will the Minister conduct a through inquiry into this ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : It is true that there are complaints regarding harassment and also demands for illegal gratification. But the complaints that have been received during 1986 from the passengers are 144 while the total number of passengers arriving in India was about 29 lakhs. The percentage of the complaints to the passenger is 0049. Action has been taken. Here, out of the complaints we have received in the last three years, in 42 cases investigation has resulted in substantiation of the allegations. Out of the 42 cases departmental action has been taken in 15 cases, and six persons have been suspended, one person has been prosecuted and he was sentenced to imprisonment for two years and a fine of Rs. 2000/-. One another person was also dismissed from service and in 64 cases their increments were stopped. Apart from that, our department has taken *suo motu* action in 32 cases of the officers. We have taken action in Bombay Airport and action has been taken against 11 persons, and in Madras Airport action has been taken against six persons. We will not spare any person who is indulging in illegal activities, particularly if they are indulging in illegal gratifications.

SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : The Government has recently taken a decision to increase the free baggage allowance of passengers coming from abroad. When will it be implemented ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Sir, we have given a free baggage allowance of Rs. 1250/-. There is no proposal to increase it. If you compare it with foreign countries, particularly, the United Kingdom, the free baggage allowance there is only £28.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : It is in Government knowledge that the airport customs is a area where corruption is very high. There may be some honest officials but they are very few. Nobody dares to complain because the passengers want to get out from the whole mess as early as possible and immediately and they give whatever these officials ask. I personally know many cases. So, what I want to know from the Minister is what system is there to supervise these officials who are dealing with the goods of the passengers ? In the airport even to check the auto rickshaws and taxis there are police aid posts. But what system is there to receive complaints from the passengers ? Is there any aid booth or something like that or whether the Government plans to establish such an aid booth to receive complaints from the passengers ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Superior officers like Deputy Collectors and Collector sometimes and even Assistant Collectors are there. They are supervising and also monitoring the clearance of the baggages. Not only that, in order to have effective monitoring, we have got at the Sahar Airport where they are particularly handling 50 per cent of the passengers who are coming to the country, close circuit TV system. Thereby we are effectively monitoring the clearance of the passengers. Besides that, at the spot itself, nowadays, you can give complaints to the officers. For example, if there is some dispute about excess charges for the baggages, immediately action is taken and on the spot a decision is taken. If the Hon. Members have any complaints, they can send those to us. We will definitely take action and we will not spare anybody.

SHRI D. N. REDDY : There are a number of irregularities committed in the disposal of confiscated goods by the Government. Due publicity is not given about the disposal of confiscated items. Will the Hon.

Minister assure the House that due publicity will be given so that the disposal of the goods is done in a proper way ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Due publicity has been given and it will also be given and it will not be stopped. So far as the disposal of goods are concerned, we are trying to expedite the disposal of the confiscated goods as early as possible.

[Translation]

Settlement of pension, G.P.F. etc.,
of retired officials

*501. **SHRI DAL CHANDER JAIN :** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of officers retired from different Departments against whom enquiry is being conducted, as a result of which the cases of their pension, provident fund and gratuity are pending and the number of such cases pending for more than one year;

(b) whether efforts are being made to settle these cases expeditiously; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (**SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM**) : (a) to (c). The information is not available in this Department.

[Translation]

SHRI DAL CHANDER JAIN : Will the Government take initiative in collecting the information and setting their cases expeditiously ?

[English]

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Over 100 thousand Government servants retire every year. Pension is paid on a departmental basis. Disciplinary action is taken on a

departmental basis. To collect the information from each one of these Departments in respect of persons against whom there are disciplinary actions and because of that their pension cases are pending, would be an impossible task. It will take a lot of time and lot of effort will have to be put in. If he wants to know about any particular Department, certainly I can collect the information about that particular Department and lay it on the Table of the House. If any pensioner has got any complaint that he has been unfairly dealt with, that we are monitoring. But to collect information about withholding of pension of retiring Government servants against whom some enquiry is being conducted, I think, it is not worth the effort.

[Translation]

SHRI DAL CHANDER JAIN : Will all such cases be settled within one year ?

[English]

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I am glad that he has asked that question. We have already taken a decision and we have already announced this in Parliament. Effective from today an order has come into force that if any Government servant is allowed to retire without a pension payment order or gratuity order and in exceptional cases by invoking special rules without a provisional pension payment order, accountability is being fixed on the Head of the Department and action will be taken against the Head of the Department for allowing a Government service to retire without a pension payment order. I sincerely hope that no Government servant will retire effective from today without a pension payment order in his hand.

Fall in value of Indian Rupee

*502. **SHRI K RAMACHANDRA REDDY :**
SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the value of Indian rupee has slumped considerably in the last three or four years;