

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, November 19, 1987/ Kartika
28, 1909 (SAKA)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Q. 187.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : What has happened to the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Bhagat ? Has he obliged us by withdrawing from the House ?

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Why were you holding it in your hands. It was afraid of it

(Interruptions)

[English]

Inquiry into Purchase of Horses from Australia

*187. SHRI C. JANGA REDDY† :

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether any inquiry has been conducted into the purchase deal of inferior quality of 10 horses from Australia after two of them died here after their arrival, another two were found lame and the rest gave a very poor performance in the Seoul Asian Games; and

(b) if so, the outcome of the enquiry and the action taken on its findings ?

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THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA) : (a) to (b). A departmental enquiry has been ordered by the Ministry of Defence into the purchase of horses from Australia. The Committee has not yet submitted its report.

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my main question has not been answered. I had asked whether out of the ten horses purchased by the Government, two horses died here and another two were found lame, but in the reply it has been stated that enquiry is being conducted. In this way my main question has not been replied to.

MR. SPEAKER : Had the horses not died or not found lame, the question would not have arisen.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had asked :

[English]

“Whether any enquiry has been conducted into the purchase deal of inferior quality of ten horses from Australia after two of them died here after their arrival, another two were found lame.....”

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : This is in reply to that.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY : It should be stated whether horses have died or not ?

MR. SPEAKER : That is why an enquiry is being held.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Post-mortem is being conducted.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY : POST-mortem is being conducted or cremation is being held.

I would also like to know the reason for getting this enquiry conducted under the Ministry of Defence ; the purpose for which and the Department by which these horses were purchased ; and the names of Officers who visited Australia before making this purchase ?

[*English*]

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : It was in 1985 that eight horses were purchased from Australia. The grant was given by the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports because the horses were purchased for the Equestrian Federation of India. The Equestrian Federation of India purchased the horses and they came to India with a grant from our Department, but they were handed over to the Army for looking after, because they felt that they would be best looked after there. The two officers who went to Australia were also from the Army. One was Lt. Col. H.S. Sodhi and the other man was veterinary expert from the Army itself, Lt. Col. K.V. Rappai, and the horses had been in their possession. I had admitted in this House that two of the horses had died out of the eight horses. I have mentioned that in this House. When in the debate last year various questions were raised, my senior colleague had announced in the House that an enquiry would be ordered, and, therefore, an enquiry is being conducted into the entire purchase of the horses. A Committee has been appointed which is going into the whole matter. The report is expected by the end of January, 1988.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : These horses are meant for sports and games.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is obvious that the horses

were purchased on behalf of the Ministry of Sports and the funds were provided by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The horses were, however handed over to the Ministry of Defence for looking after them. Then how this Department is holding the enquiry ? It has also come to our knowledge that 50 notes were sent by the Ministry of Human Resource Development for a C.B.I. enquiry, but 47 of them were destroyed and only three notes have been kept. At the instance of the Prime Minister's Secretariat, this enquiry was entrusted to the Ministry of Defence, as some body-guards of the President of India were involved in this deal. The Minister of Sports has admitted that an amount of Rs. 10 lakhs was paid, which is more than seven per cent. I would, therefore, like to know the total amount paid and the reason for not entrusting this enquiry to the C.B.I. ?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO) : Sir, there is no doubt that my Ministry is the nodal Ministry in all this but the expertise came from the Defence Ministry so it was considered proper that they look into what their people have done. Whether there is any mistake of it was just an accident that the two horses died. All this could be gone into by the experts in the Defence Ministry. Ultimately the report will come to us and we will present it. I have already assured Parliament that the enquiry would be conducted. In pursuance of my assurance we have send the best agency that would go into it in an expert manner and give us a reliable report. We have sent it and it is still under investigation.

[*Translation*]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY : It has clearly been stated in it that the hon. Minister had sanctioned a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs. When it appeared in the paper, why was it not condemned then ? It has been stated in it that it is a fact that the then Minister of Sports, Shri R.K. Jaichandra Singh, had sanctioned an amount of Rs. 10 lakhs for the purchase of horses for E.F.I.

[*English*]

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : Sir, one of the most direct reasons is that I am concerned with Human Resources. It is a matter of horses, so we send it to the Ministry which has some expertise in horses and they will give us the report after it.

[*Translation*]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY : Let us know whether this enquiry had been entrusted to the C.B.I. and whether the Prime Minister's Secretariat, later on, stopped this enquiry ?

[*English*]

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : My assurance was that only an inquiry would be conducted. Then when we looked for the agency which could conduct the enquiry in an expert manner we found that the Defence Ministry would be best suited to do that.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : The Minister has just now said that an enquiry is being conducted regarding the purchase of horses. I would like to know, how much money was spent to purchase these horses and why the CBI enquiry is withdrawn and a departmental enquiry is ordered ? This is a serious matter though it involves the purchase of horses. We see that in every deal it is happening. You have appointed the accuser himself as a judge. So, why can't they appoint some other body to inquire into it and then again send it back to CBI for proper enquiry ?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : Sir, I would first of all like to clarify that there is no question of withdrawing it from the CBI. It never went to CBI, so where is the question of withdrawing it. It is true that Rs. 10 lakhs were given and we have got the accounts of this. Rs. 9,32,000 has been spent. Rs. 75,000 was given towards the expenses like the Air Fares and other such expenditure that was involved. The audited statement has been submitted to us by the Equestrian Federation of India, which is the

recognised organisation affiliated to the IOA and to the International Equestrian Federation. We have got the account. But since the questions were raised as to why horses died ; whether when they were purchased there was something wrong. That is why we said, let there be an expert enquiry into the condition of horses which were in the hands of the Army when the horses died and, therefore, we asked them to conduct a total enquiry. The Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Defence is the Chairman of the 3 member Committee which is enquiring into all this.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : But can't you get the horses from Rajasthan or Bangalore ?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : Yes, I agree we do have horses but they do not come up to the standards required for international participation.

[*Translation*]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : We had thought that it would continue for quite a long time.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : So, you have already surmised that.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Who and the Trojan horses ?

Small Integrated Steel Plants in Private Sector

*188 SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA† :

SHRI AMAL DATTA :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to allow private sector companies to set up small integrated steel plants ; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposal ?