

## RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 4th August, 1980/the 13th  
Shravana, 1902 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the  
clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

### MEMBERS SWORN

1. Shri Sultan Singh (Haryana)
2. Shri Sushil Chand Mohunta  
(Haryana)
3. Prof. N. M. Kamble (Maharashtra)

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### AIR Correspondents on foreign assignments

\*161. SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of All India Radio Correspondents on foreign assignments and the names of countries where they are posted;

(b) the facilities extended to these Correspondents;

(c) the amount of foreign allowance granted to each one of these correspondents and how does it compare with those of our Embassy staff of similar status posted in that country; and

(d) whether it is a fact that some correspondents have to furnish a resident permit every month; if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI V. P. SATHE): (a) All India Radio has four Special Correspondents posted at Teheran (Iran), Cairo (Egypt), Hong Kong and Dacca (Bangladesh).

(b) and (c). The information is given in the attached statement.

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(d) The Special Correspondent posted at Teheran did face some difficulty initially in obtaining the resident permit, in view of the overall disturbed conditions obtaining there at that time. This was, however, sorted out later on with the assistance of Ministry of External Affairs and our Embassy in Tehran.

### Statement

(b) In addition to their own grade pay, as admissible from time to time, the Special Correspondents are extended the following facilities:—

(i) Foreign allowance as admissible to non-IFS deputationists.

(ii) Additional foreign allowance in lieu of Income Tax.

(iii) Conveyance allowance for tour within short distance at the place of posting.

(iv) Entertainment allowance.

(v) Free furnished residential accommodation.

(vi) Office and electronic equipment and cards for filing messages by telex or cable.

(c) The Special Correspondents are equated with First Secretary or Second Secretary of the Indian Missions in the concerned country, depending upon their pay scale, for the purpose of payment of foreign allowance. The amount of foreign allowance is granted as under:—

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| (i) Special Correspondent at Teheran     | Rs. 5,410 p.m. |
| (ii) Special Correspondent at Cairo      | Rs. 3,430 p.m. |
| (iii) Special Correspondent at Hong Kong | Rs. 4,050 p.m. |
| (iv) Special Correspondent at Dacca      | Rs. 1,020 p.m. |

Broadcasting

**SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN:** Sir, in reply to my question (b), the Minister has stated that they are being provided with office. May I know from him whether these special correspondents are also given the facility of having assistants? And what provision has been made for salaries, etc. so far as the assistance are concerned? This is number one.

Secondly, if these special correspondents have to go out for obtaining information or for covering certain programmes in that particular country, are they given travelling allowance also?

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Sir, if my friend, the hon. Member, would kindly read the Annexure, he would see that I have supplied, along with the question, all the information which he wants. Sir, if I may be allowed to read out for him...

**SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN:** I have read the statement.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** It is a question between short distances and long distances.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Sir, allowances are given. He is provided with an allowance for conveyance.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** For short distances. I remember, your answer was for short distances

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Sir, for long distances he has probably to manage with the other allowances that he is given.

**SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN:** Sir, in reply to part (d) of the Question the hon. Minister has referred to certain difficulties being faced by the Special Correspondent at Teheran and those difficulties he has informed this House, have been removed. Should we take it that at other places there are no difficulties so far as resident permits are concerned?

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Sir, at other places we have no information of any difficulty.

**SHRI S. W. DHABE:** Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether these correspondents are permanently stationed or whether they are stationed for some duration or period and whether they are by rotation? Secondly, is there any proposal to post more correspondents in different parts of the world?

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Sir, the correspondents are posted and there is no fixed tenure till they are changed. That is how it is done. Secondly, Sir, we have not any proposal for opening more offices abroad in other places.

**SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY:** Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister the reasons for stationing AIR correspondents in foreign countries? We find from his reply that only in West Asian and South-East Asian countries four correspondents have been appointed but they are not certainly places of much importance considering other places like Moscow, Washington and London. May I know what is the criterion that the Government has laid down for appointing correspondents in foreign countries?

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Sir, the Criterion is that from those areas where we do not have access to normal sources of information there we try to post our correspondents so that we get information about those parts and that is how you will find our correspondents in these places. But from those areas where we have other services available, we do not put additional correspondents.

**SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA:** Sir, May I know...

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** You have had one from your party.

**SHRI PURABI MUKHOPADHYAY:** In the Question Hour also do you follow that principle?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I cannot permit every Member from every Party to put questions. I want to have a well-balanced approach. Yes, Mr. Shaha-buddin.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, I presume that the AIR correspondents stationed in these four places do not cover just the country of their posting, but the entire region and, as such, how far will it be correct to say that India does not have any other regular sources of information in those regions of the world? Are any other news agencies, Indian or foreign, located in those countries, or are these countries members of the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool, which give us access to exchange of information? So, it is in that sense that I would like to understand the usefulness and the purpose served by the stationing of these AIR correspondents abroad.

SHRI V. P. SATHE: Sir, the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool has not yet become functional and operative. Therefore, it was at that point that in these regions from where we did not have other news agencies that we thought that we should have our own correspondents to get proper information; for example, from Arabic countries, and so we posted a person in Cairo; from the eastern region, and therefore we posted a man in Hong Kong, and for obvious reasons also in Teheran and in Dacca. These four places will be very obvious. Well they are for regions.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : हमारे जो निकटवर्ती देश हैं, पाकिस्तान, सीलोन, बर्मा आदि, इनमें आल इंडिया रेडियो के कारेसपोन्डेंस नहीं हैं। क्यों नहीं हैं ? अभी आपने पी० टी० आई०, यू० एन० आई०, हिन्दुस्तान समाचार और समाचार भारती, इन चारों न्यूज एजेंसीज को यह आश्वासन दिया है कि निकटवर्ती देशों में वे अपने कारेसपोन्डेंस रखें और आप अपने कारेसपोन्डेंस शायद वहां नहीं रखेंगे, तो इस नीति के पीछे क्या कारण हैं ?

एक माननीय सदस्य : रहस्य क्या है ?

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : रहस्य नहीं, कारण क्या है ?

श्री बी० पी० साठे : जहां न्यूज एजेंसीज, यू० एन० आई०, पी० टी० आई० के लोग हैं, जैसे पाकिस्तान में या अन्य जगहों पर, वहां ए० आई० आर० के मलग कारेसपोन्डेंस रखने की आवश्यकता नहीं और जैसा मैंने कहा कि पहले जब न्यूज एजेंसी कारेसपोन्डेंस बहुत स्थानों में नहीं थे उस वक्त हमने यह सोचा था कि कारेसपोन्डेंस भेजे जायं, इसमें कोई कॉम्प्लेक्ट नहीं है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, we will go on to the next question. (Interruptions). I cannot ask everybody.

#### Clearance of the Silent Valley Project

\*162. SHRI K. C. SEBASTIAN:†  
SHRI S. KUMARAN:

Will the Minister of ENERGY AND COAL be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 55 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 9th June, 1980 and state:

(a) whether the Central Government have taken any final decision on the request of the Government of Kerala for clearing its Silent Valley Project; and

(b) if not, by when a final decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN): (a) and (b). In view of the serious reservations expressed by the environmentalists and ecologists all over the world at the possible destruction of the Silent Valley forest, the Kerala Government were advised to stop further work on the project in order that the ecological aspects be studied fully. The preliminary reports submitted recently

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri K. C. Sebastian.