

and Gujarat is more than that of Calcutta. Out of the 2300 smugglers detained so far under COFEPOSA, only 204 come from Calcutta. The authority which has been established in Delhi is also taking care of Calcutta. But in order to satisfy the hon. Member, I would inform the House that we are going to appoint a competent authority for Calcutta also shortly.

Loss of "Priceless Nehru Letter"

- *36. SHRI NIRANJAN SINGH TALIB:
SHRI LEONARD SOLOMAN
SARING:†
SHRI SYED NIZAM-UD-DIN:
SHRI R. NARASIMHA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the answer to starred Question 14 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 6th January, 1976 and state:

(a) the names and designations of the officers held responsible for the loss of the "Priceless Nehru Letter" on the basis of the C.B.I. report; and

(b) the action taken by Government against these officers?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) and (b) On the advice tendered by the Central Vigilance Commission Departmental proceedings have been initiated against the Officers concerned and a Commissioner for Departmental Enquiries has been appointed as Inquiry officer. Further action will be taken on receipt of his report.

SHRI LEONARD SOLOMAN SARING: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. minister whether they have taken a final decision in this matter. I would also like to know whether proper care was taken for the safe custody of the letter in transit and whether it was insured.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Leonard Solomon Saring.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, the letter was insured. The CBI enquiry shows that there has been negligence or carelessness in the handling of this matter by the concerned officers. We are awaiting the report of the Inquiry Commissioner.

Sales tax evasion cases in Delhi

- *37. SHRI KHURSHED ALAM
KHAN :‡

SHRI IBRAHIM KALANIYA:
SHRI R. NARASIMHA REDDY:
SHRI JAGDISH JOSHI:

Will the Minister of REVENUE AND BANKING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sales tax revenue has increased considerably in Delhi since the enforcement of the Delhi Sales Tax Act, 1975;

(b) whether any cases of large scale evasion of sales tax have been detected in Delhi during the last six months; and

(c) if so, the number thereof and the total amount involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF REVENUE AND BANKING (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) i (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) During six months ending 30th April, 1976, 362 cases of evasion of sales tax were detected in Delhi. In these cases the reported suppression of sales was about Rs. 10 crores involving a tax amount of Rs. 61 lakhs.

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN: I would like to know whether the revenue from sales tax has increased to the extent estimated at the time of the consideration of the Bill. Besides, what percentage of the increase is attributable to the revised rate of tax and what percentage is attributable to better enforcement?

‡The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Khurshed Alam Khan.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE. It is very difficult for me to say to what extent it is attributable to better enforcement and to what extent to the increased rate of tax. But I would give this information to the hon. Member. In the last five months, from November 1975 to March 1976, the increase has been of the order of Rs. 16 crores. In the corresponding period of last year, it was of the order of Rs. 23.90 crores. This means, it has gone up to Rs. 40.02 crores. But I cannot quantify to what extent it is due to better enforcement and to what extent due to the increased rates.

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN: At least, it indicates to what extent evasion was there before. Secondly, I would like to know whether the firms or persons who were involved in the sales tax evasion cases were quota-holders, licence-holders or agency-holders. If so, I would like to know whether the quotas, licences or agencies have been cancelled.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I do not have the figures in regard to these 362 cases. Regarding the penal provisions, I would inform the hon. Member that whenever a case is detected, the charge is established. Thereafter, the procedures laid down under the law are followed.

श्री इब्राहीम कलानिया : क्या माननीय मंत्री जी यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि इस प्रकार की टेक्स चोरियों को रोकने के लिए सरकार की क्या योजना है ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, so far as tax evasion is concerned, primarily, they are streamlining the tax administration machinery. Secondly, there was one point on which hon. Members of the House, particularly Members belonging to the States, were agitated that there was a disparity between the Delhi sales tax and the sales tax levied in the neighbouring States. By introducing new Acts we are taking action now and we have tried to do away with

the disparity as far as possible. Thirdly, by introducing more vigilance, augmenting the staff, streamlining the administrative machinery and increasing the penal provisions of the law we are trying to plug the loopholes for sales tax evasion.

श्री जगदीश जोशी : क्या माननीय मंत्री जी यह बतलाने की कृपा करेंगे कि जो असमानता को दूर करने का प्रयास आपने कानून से किया वह असमानता किसी समय भी भिन्न भिन्न पड़ोसी राज्यों में कानूनों को परिवर्तन के द्वारा बदला जा सकता है, इस चीज को ध्यान में रखते हुए और बिक्री कर की चोरी को रोकने के मितसिले में पूरे देश में एक सामान्य प्रणाली को लागू करने के सम्बन्ध में जो आप सलाह देने जा रहे हैं ताकि सामान्य बिक्री कर प्रणाली लागू करने के मितसिले में पूरे देश में एक सा कानून हो जाय और एक से दूसरे प्रांतों के बीच में तस्करी न हो सके, क्या इस दिशा में आप किसी प्रकार का आदेश या सलाह देने जा रहे हैं ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, this is a high policy matter, and the hon. Member would excuse me if I say this is an over-simplification of the problem on the part of the State Governments to say that we can introduce a uniform sales tax, because this is an area where the State Governments earn their resources and raise their resources; and none of the State Governments would agree to have a uniform sales tax all over the country and empower the Central Government with that authority. But, at the same time, we have a system of conferences of the Finance Ministers of the particular region to do away with the distortions which take place by the introduction of a system of payment of sales tax at different points. So far as Delhi is concerned, recently we had a meeting of the State Finance Ministers of this zone and we tried to narrow down the differences which existed, and this exercise is being constantly made. But this is one area which is very sensitive to the State Governments and to us.