

there and so far as the Government is concerned we protest to them and we tell them what they are doing is wrong. But in this matter we keep an open mind and whatever suggestions hon. Members make in this respect we will examine them and try to improve our publicity.

PROF. SHANTILAL KOTHARI : We have seen in 1965 when Pakistan attacked India in the newspapers of the middle East, Far East, Ceylon and even of U.A.R. the broadcasts given by Radio Pakistan got the maximum publicity and so also in Japan; in fact I had sent clippings to Lal Bahadur Shastri and our own views got into those papers only after 26 days practically when the war was over. It is not a question of argument. I am requesting the Government to look into it a little more closely because the situation unfortunately . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please put a question.

PROF. SHANTILAL KOTHARI : Therefore, I ask the Government whether it has no propaganda machinery. Our Missions have not been very successful in this respect everywhere. May I, therefore, request the Government to consider having a small, special area publicity committee—may be the Middle East and something else, Asia and something else, Europe and something else—to go into it and co-ordinate the communications media?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is a suggestion for action. Next question.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : It is an important question, this Pak propaganda.

CABINET MINISTERS' VISITS ABROAD

*239. **SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA :** Will the **PRIME MINISTER** be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of India are contemplating to follow certain conventions regarding foreign visits by Cabinet Ministers; and

(b) if so, what are those conventions?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER (DR. (SHRIMATI) SARAJINI MAHISHI) :
a) and (b) Ministers undertake visits

abroad according to actual requirements, with due regard to the need for economy specially in the expenditure of foreign exchange.

All cases of deputation of Ministers come for final approval to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Prime Minister who is in charge of the Finance portfolio.

One of the conventions observed is that hospitality in the form of passage is not accepted from the host Government or organisation concerned, in cases in which visits are undertaken on the basis of invitations from abroad.

No new procedure or conventions are contemplated.

SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA : Is it a fact that certain objections were raised by the Finance Ministry in this connection and it was decided that, except for purposes which are connected with the portfolios of Cabinet Ministers and the other members in the Treasury Benches should not go to foreign countries unless otherwise specially permitted by the Prime Minister and it was also reported that certain conventions have been laid down? May I know from the Prime Minister what exactly are those conventions? The general impression among the public is that members in the Treasury Benches and also members of cultural delegations are permitted to go to foreign countries without much difficulty, while those who need go actually for the purpose of education, business or something else, do not. May I know from the Prime Minister, therefore, what exactly are the conventions and whether she will make them public, so that this misapprehension may be removed?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Madam, the question specifically relates to the conventions regarding foreign visits by Cabinet Ministers. So I was not aware that this was a question which embraced the whole country, so to speak. There are no restrictions on any body going out except our shortage of foreign exchange. I think many Members of Parliament go and whenever they have come to us for permission, it has been given, except that, there may be one or two cases here and there for special reasons. Certainly a large number of businessmen are going out all the time in connection with their business interests.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : May I know if there is any truth in the Press report that certain Cabinet Ministers, whose names I need not give, wanted to go abroad during the current summer and that their visits were approved by the Prime Minister, but the proposals were overruled by the Ministry of Finance? If that is correct, may I know why this was done and whether it is considered a healthy precedent?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Madam, I can assure the House that there is no truth in this.

SHRI C. D. PANDE : May I know whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that on many occasions Ministers of Cabinet rank and Ministers of State have gone abroad for a small business, for example signing a protocol or agreement about cultural exchange or on an invitation of a similar type? Why could not such agreement or protocol, as was the usual practice in olden days, be signed by the Ambassador concerned in that country? Now, Minister goes all the way from here for an hour or so, spending Rs. 20 or Rs. 30 thousand apart from the foreign exchange. Even the other expenses, which are considerable, should be avoided.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Each case is looked into on its merits. Normally people do not go to sign agreements. It is not necessary but sometimes there may be circumstances in which it is considered more desirable to do so.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Now I raise certain questions of principle. First of all, I should like to know, how is it that, when a Cabinet Minister thinks that he should go—rightly or wrongly—even his application, a Cabinet Minister of the Central Government, should come through the Minister of Finance? Well, do I understand that here the Minister of Finance has special jurisdiction, when the Government so thinks or the Department concerned so thinks, that the Minister concerned should not go? I should like to know why it is so. Secondly, the Prime Minister said that there is no difficulty, except for the restriction of foreign exchange. Is the Prime Minister still ignorant of the fact that the P-Form mechanism is being utilised to withhold passport or to invalidate valid passports, so that people cannot go abroad and the

Finance Minister and the Finance Ministry are very often using the P-Form in collusion sometimes with the Home Ministry to see that valid passport holders are not in a position to leave the country, even when there is no foreign exchange involved? Finally, is she aware of the fact that the Deputy Chief Minister of Orissa and the Education Minister of Orissa, on an invitation from the Soviet Union, applied for going abroad and the P-Form is being denied to these two Ministers of the State Government, who are members of the Cabinet also? I hope the Prime Minister will frankly tell us what is the mysterious thing in between the two Departments, that is going on.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Madam, I love a mystery as much as anybody else, but there is no mystery at all. It is absolutely clear. The Member has tried to make out as if there were some sharp division of opinion between myself and the Finance Minister in regard to these matters. It is not so. It is a question of colleagues working together and if a particular procedure makes the work easier, than we function in that way. There is no question of using the P-Form to prevent people going abroad, I think the hon. Member was trying to hint that from a political aspect. With regard to the two Ministers, this case has been brought to my notice only last evening and I am looking into it.

श्री मेहरचंद खन्ना को पाकिस्तानी पदक

* 240. **श्री निरंजन वर्मा :** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेगी कि :

(क) क्या भारतीय राजनयिकों या मंत्रियों द्वारा विदेशी सरकारों से पदक अथवा अन्य पुरस्कार स्वीकार किये जाने के विषय में कोई नियमित आदेश है;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि पाकिस्तान सरकार ने भारत सरकार के एक भूतपूर्व मंत्री श्री मेहरचंद खन्ना को एक पदक प्रदान किया है; और

(ग) यदि हाँ, तो उस पर सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है?