

court of law. And that is what we are doing, and in this purpose one cannot attribute motives to the Governments.

Next, Madam Deputy Chairman....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: How long would you take, Mr. Reddy?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: I am finishing, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would request the House to spare a few minutes more for this. We will finish with this and then go to the other matter.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: One effective argument that has been advanced by some of the hon. Members is that the Tribunal had done good work. I am not for a moment saying that it had not done good work. But most of the matters were miscellaneous Petitions filed under various sections, and the work that had been entrusted to the Tribunal under section 388B, had been obstructed by various interim applications, by various writ petitions. Still, as I said, a matter is pending before the Calcutta High Court on a writ petition. So, Madam, this is the very purpose for which we have brought this Bill; there is no mystery behind it, and I think hon. Members would accept the Bill.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the abolition of the Companies Tribunal and for matters connected therewith be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up the clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 4 and the Schedule were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Madam, I move:

"That the Bill be passed."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 176 RE. ASHOKA HOTELS LTD.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now we come to the Short Duration Discussion. Mr. M. P. Bhargava. May I, before you begin, say that you will get ten minutes, and all others whose names appear here, and if there is a little more time, some others, five minutes each; very strictly five minutes each.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): We cannot have the discussion like that.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA (Uttar Pradesh): Madam Deputy Chairman, I rise to raise a discussion on the proposed construction of an annexe and a revolving tower to Ashoka Hotels Limited, New Delhi, the grant of contract to a particular firm therefore, and matters connected therewith.

I would like to take up this subject in three parts. The first part would be whether additional accommodation is required to justify the construction of an annexe to the Ashoka Hotel, and a hall. The second part would be whether a revolving tower is necessary, what purpose does it serve and what would be its approximate cost. And the third part would be the grant of contract to a particular contractor.

The first report of the Ashoka Hotels Limited was discussed in this House on the 30th August, 1957. Many hon. Members of this House expressed doubts at that time that the expenditure on this Ashoka Hotel was an expenditure which would not bear fruit, that it was wasteful expenditure and, in fact, they wanted the Government to stop the project at whatever stage it was. At that time I had said that the Ashoka Hotel was going to prove that it would earn foreign exchange for the country and that it would be a good place for tourists from all over the world to come and stay there. And I am happy to tell the House that my prophecy of 1957 has come true, and that is borne out by the fact that the occupancy of the Ashoka Hotel is very high all the year round, and the Ashoka Hotel

enjoys a reputation in the world, of which India should be proud.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY (Mysore): After 'Oberoi International'.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: Now I come to the first part of my question, whether additional accommodation is necessary. India has a vast potential for the development of tourism and for earning of foreign exchange from tourism. One of the first essentials for the development of tourism is the availability of good hotel accommodation. From time to time the tourist department has been assessing the availability of beds in the various hotels, and their assessment has always shown that additional beds are required for coping with the foreign tourist traffic. That is one consideration why it is thought desirable to have additional accommodation in the annexe which is to be built to the Ashoka Hotel. Now there is another pressing reason which is more important, and that is the conference of UNCTAD, which is to be held in January-March, 1968, in Delhi, which is sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry—now they are of course two Ministries. That would require about 2,500 beds for housing the delegates who will come from all parts of the world. Even if we take into account the accommodation of all the first-class hotels in Delhi, it will not be possible to accommodate all of them. Therefore, a quick decision had to be taken as to what should be done to meet the situation. And to meet this situation a hurried decision has been taken that to the Ashoka Hotel an annexe should be built. All possibilities were explored whether another hotel could come up in time, whether any other arrangements could be made for housing the delegates, and ultimately they came to the decision that only an annexe to the Ashoka Hotel can be ready in time to meet the requirements of that conference. And in connection with that conference and other similar conferences that might be held hereafter, it was found that there was no hall large enough for a big gathering of all the delegates for a meal or for

a conference. In the past the Hotel had been unable to meet the demands for banquets of gatherings of even 1,500 persons. It was therefore decided that a conference hall to seat 2,500 persons be built along with the annexe to the Ashoka Hotel. That explains part 1 of my question, i.e. why additional accommodation is required and that is the justification for the construction of the annexe and the hall.

Now I come to the revolving tower. There is some mis-apprehension about this revolving tower. What is this revolving tower? In a number of countries hotels have been built with revolving restaurants on the top of the hotel buildings or on high towers. These have become a great tourist attraction. If we want to earn foreign exchanges from our visitors we have to provide them with certain comforts consistent with their needs. Such revolving restaurants or revolving towers have become almost a necessity all the world over and all modern countries are building such revolving restaurants in their first class hotels. (Time bell rings) I will be finishing soon.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU (Uttar Pradesh): What is this revolving tower?

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: I will explain to you, Mr. Sapru. The revolving restaurant only means that a portion of the restaurant in the top of a ring round a core would slowly revolve making a full round in every sixty minutes. While the service would be in the non-revolving core, the visitors to the restaurant would be sitting in the revolving portion and they would get a view of the historical and government buildings such as the Qutub, Purana Quilla, Humayun's Tomb, Safdarjang, Juma Masjid, Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Central Secretariat and the august Parliament House, the whole city with its houses, roads and gardens.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN (Andhra Pradesh): And Parliament House?

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: Please let me finish. Time is very short. By this we will be providing our foreign

visitors with an opportunity to see at a glance the whole city while sitting at one place without having to move from place to place. That is the advantage of having a revolving tower.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore): Is it to be a Tokyo Tower or Eiffel Tower?

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: There seems to be some misapprehension about the cost and probably some hon. Members have a feeling that it will cost several crores. That is not so. The whole project comprising the annexe, hall and the revolving tower will cost Rs. 87 lakhs. The revolving tower will cost only about Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 lakhs. This is the misapprehension which I wanted to remove.

Now I come to the third part of my question, namely about the contract.

DR. B. N. ANTANI (Gujarat): That is the main part.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: That is the main part and I will reply to that part. I am sorry to say that the courtesy shown by the Minister in giving interview and asking his Ministry to issue tender notices and so on is being exploited. I am very sorry having to make that remark. Now what is this contract? Twenty four limited tenders were issued.

SHRI OM MEHTA (Jammu and Kashmir): On a point of information, Sir, I would like to know how many new rooms will be built?

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: One hundred and fifty.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: The Minister will give the answer.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: Although the tender notices were issued to 24 parties only six parties responded. That shows that of the 24 contractors—and they were all first class contractors—18 were not in a position to even give the tender. Only 6 of them could give a tender. And then the tenders were opened. If I may say so, all the tenders were not complete in the true sense of a tender. And they could not be complete because all the particulars about the revolving tower and how it is to be built,

were not known either to the Ministry or to the contractors themselves. So if I was to consider these six tenders I would have rejected all the six of them. I would have done it if I had the time. But time was the essence of the whole thing. The whole project had to be finished by a particular date. Now what should be the considerations when examining these tenders? The considerations should be these. Which of the six parties can finish the work? What is the past record of the parties? What are the financial resources of the parties? What is the technical know-how of the parties? What is the capacity of the party to complete the project in time? These are the considerations which are to be taken into account. (*Time bell rings*) I will finish in a minute, Madam. When the six tenders were opened the lowest tender was that of the gentleman of that firm to whom the Minister had shown courtesy. But unfortunately . . .

SHRI P. N. SAPRU: What is the name of the firm?

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: I am not going to give the name of the firm. You can find it. To that firm the Minister had shown courtesy. But unfortunately the record of his work in taking up previous government work was far from satisfactory. I will humbly ask the House this question. Should a project which had to be completed within a specified time and for a particular specific purpose, namely, for the holding of a conference, be entrusted to a party whose record of work was unsatisfactory? That was the situation which we were placed in. And then the second best contractor had to be considered and when that second best contractor was considered the Government thought it fit to negotiate with him and to arrive at a solution which will be satisfactory to both the parties. That is exactly what was done and that is how the particular contract had to be given to the second contractor. These are the facts and I am sure the House will agree with me that this project is a "must" and the contract has been

[Shri M. P. Bhargava.]

rightly given keeping in view the fact that the work has to be completed in time.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There are ten hon. Members who had asked for this discussion. I have got their names and many more are coming. I would only request hon. Members and say that if you keep within five minutes each then everybody will be accommodated, otherwise some will have to be left out.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Those who had asked for the discussion? They may be given ten minutes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, I said five minutes. Mr. Bhandari is not here. Mr. Chordia also is not here.

श्री निरंजन वर्मा (मध्य प्रदेश) : उनकी जगह पर कम रहेंगे ।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, not now.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The time may be kept as ten minutes and those who are present will distribute it among themselves.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Not 10 but 5. Let us not keep on revolving like the revolving tower.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Yes, Madam, no more discussion, I will stick to the time.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: We did not give notice for raising this discussion to have a ministerial statement right at the beginning. Well, I do not know how Mr. Bhargava's name came first because as soon as the statement was made I sent in my name. But that is a matter into which I do not wish to go now. The Minister should have made the statement. As far as the revolving tower is concerned it is not needed. I shall come to that later. Now I shall deal with the contract.

Madam Deputy Chairman, the tenders were opened on the 10th April, 1967 at 3.30 p.m. Firstly, the tender of Messrs. Lyall & Co. was opened,

then of Messrs. Uttam Singh Duggal & Co. followed by the tenders of Tirath Ram Ahuja & Co., Bhai Sunder Das Sardar Singh and Mehta Teja Singh & Co. That was how the tenders were opened. When the first tender was opened the total amount and the forwarding letter accompanying the tender were read out. This was followed by others tenders in the same way. When all the tenders were opened the Managing Director thanked all those who were present at the time of opening of the tenders and said that since all the tenders had been received they would take care of them. At this point, Madam Deputy Chairman, the representative of Messrs. Uttam Singh Duggal & Co. Ltd., Mr. A. S. Bhandari, pointed out that the tender of Messrs. Tirath Ram Ahuja was incomplete.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, why is Mr. Bhupesh Gupta wasting the time of the House because the document that he is reading from has been circulated to us. I also have got it; others also have got it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I am reading from my notes.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: You are interested in a particular contractor and that is why . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I want the whole lot to go (*Interruptions.*)

Madam, if I am disturbed like this, how can I go on? I want the whole thing to be cancelled; I want the whole question to be gone into *de novo*. Do you mean to say that I stand for contractors here? You may do it, Mr. Arora. You may stand for J. K. Industries and go after Mr. Ram Rattan Gupta, if you want that way. You can speak like that but I don't.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Mr. Bhupesh Gupta is pleading the cause of a particular contractor and reading from a document circulated by him.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I am pleading that all these things should be rejected. New ones should be found if at all. Therefore I will not say that kind of thing. You know it

very well. I say the whole thing is manipulation. (*Interruptions*).

Madam Deputy Chairman, I think my time will not be wasted like this.

Then objection was made, the tender of Messrs. Tirth Ram Ahuja was considered to be incomplete. Now manipulations happened after that. Even before other tenders were invited Mr. Ahuja to the best of my knowledge was telling his friends and others that he would be getting the contract for about a crore of rupees, Rs. 100 lakhs. That was the initial figure; it is also given in the tender. That was what he said. Now it is clear from what he was telling in the market place that Mr. Ahuja would be favoured. How could Mr. Ahuja say so? Mr. Ahuja's tender was incomplete in the sense—and I have managed to get a copy of the tender submitted later . . .

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Everybody has got it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have permitted him; let him continue.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Certain conditions had been put in. I am not supporting any of these tenderers.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: You are supporting a particular firm, U.S. Duggal & Co.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Arjun Arora speaks against one big businessman because he is supported by the other. But I speak against the whole lot, the whole bloody lot.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: No big business supports me and it is Mr. Bhupesh Gupta who is supported by big business and at the moment Mr. Bhupesh Gupta who is speaking in favour of a big businessman.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You are always speaking against one big businessman. Will you criticise J. K. Industries here?

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: I will; I will.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Arjun Arora, the time is so limited that each one must finish within five

898RS-6.

minutes. If you go on in this way I shall not be able to call everybody.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Have you been briefed by Mr. Ahuja to interrupt me like this?

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Have you been lobbied by Uttam Singh Duggal & Co., contractors?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Not at all. I demand that all these tenders must be cancelled and none of these six who submitted these tenders should get it. That is my contention. And the one to whom you have given the work, take it away also. I tell you why I say so. Serious allegations have been made. I do not know, Mr. Ratnam, who happens to be the Chairman happens to be a friend of the particular contractor and we are told . . .

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Madam, how is my hon. friend entitled to mention the name of a person who is not present in the House?

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: I think the officers should not be mentioned by name.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In the contract everything is given. I shall say that the Chairman of the Ashoka Hotels is connected with the contractor. (*Interruptions*) Let me finish. What is all this as if names are not mentioned here? The Chairman of the Ashoka Hotels Ltd.—if you do not like the name to be mentioned—I say happens to be a friend of this particular contractor and it was because of this he was saying such a thing. We have information. I would like to place before this House that this particular contractor has been favouring this gentleman and a house has been built for him—we are told—by this contractor and the contractor himself supervised the construction of this house in Delhi, that is Mr. Ahuja, proprietor of this firm; I have also got letters from various sources, from the Union people, from the workers, of the Ashoka Hotel. I find that this gentleman is connected with the Delhi Cloth Mills. He is connected with that and yet he is the Chairman of

(Shri Bhupesh Gupta.)
this public sector concern also. These are all very material facts and all these things have given rise to the suspicion in the mind of the Ashoka Hotel workers and in the mind of the people in general. Therefore is it not better that all these people who submitted tenders be put out of bounds in regard to this matter? None of them should be given this. If one has been given, it should be taken back from him.

Madam, Deputy Chairman, many things can be said about the Ashoka Hotel. Apart from all this, this contractor, Mr. Ahuja, somehow or other has got very good pull with the Government. In Bhopal I understand he got very good certain contracts earlier on very favourable terms. His tender was accepted although it was the highest tender. And you will find here a lot of money is being wasted, and the Ashoka Hotel is running at a loss; not loss, but its profits are going down. Machines worth lakhs of rupees have been imported but are rusting and these include a costly generator, electric ovens for bakery, a soda fountain in the swimming pool, bread-cutters, milk-shakers, etc. The Manager of the Hotel is the most ill-mannered person. Leave aside the workmen who are insulted but even Ambassadors are insulted. I will give you an example of typical mismanagement. We find that a Bar-e-Kabab—whatever it is called—is being run here. It is outside the main Hotel building and there is great leakage there. Then after spending lakhs of rupees in making a new restaurant—I think it is called Rouge-et-noir; I do not know all these names . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is all right.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: . . . the management has failed to popularise it and the average sale of this restaurant is about Rs. 40 per day while the expenditure on it is not less than Rs. 300 per day. It is worth mentioning here that the bandwallahs are paid Rs. 3000 per month to play at this

restaurant alone. This is the kind of mismanagement going on there.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I have got a list of such cases of examples of mismanagement. Lots of things are being stolen, lots of things are being taken away. Refrigerators and other things are being used by a certain big official of the Hotel. All these things have come to our notice. I can divulge the source; it is the workers and the Union people who have brought this to notice.

Madam Deputy Chairman—I should like to keep within time—this tender was incomplete. Mr. Bhargava says other tenders were also incomplete. I say reject all the tenders including this.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: That is what I said.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: First of all nobody raised objection to the other contracts. Even so, since the deal is suspicious I demand an enquiry into the whole thing. We would also like to know about the house in Lajpat Nagar as to who built that house for Mr. Ratnam, Chairman of the Ashoka Hotels, whether it is not a fact that the owner of this firm which got the contract built that house. And according to our information he even supervised its construction. I say all this because this is the entire story.

As for the revolving tower, nobody knew what it was. And according to our information the cost would not be Rs. 4 lakhs but much higher. Nobody knew what it would be like; somebody gave the idea 'let us have a revolving tower' and immediately it was decided upon. If you go through the tenders received, Mr. Tirath Ram & Ahuja does not know what it is. In his tender he expressed doubts on this; even so the tender was given to him. In his tender he put in a number of conditions and these conditions made the tender invalid. I have not got copies of the other tenders and if Mr. Bhargava says they were incom-

plete I will believe him. But the surprise is that Mr. Tirathram Ahuja has been favoured in this manner under the new scheme. They took the opportunity of the new scheme for the new construction. It was somewhere justified that the construction had to be made, but then immediately their favourite contractor got the contract, who had all the connections. Why was not a general tender invited? Why first of all, there were only twenty-four? Why was there no advertisement in the newspaper inviting general tenders from all the contractors and then they could have decided as to who should be given and who should not be given? First of all, the number was restricted to twenty-four. Then six came and then things were going on behind the stage. There were negotiations between the management of Ashoka Hotels and that particular contractor, so that things went according to schedule. The tender formality was nothing but a show window behind which the deal was clinched . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That will do.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The Chairman happens to be connected with the Finance Ministry earlier. Now, he is connected with the Delhi Cloth Mills and possibly, therefore, it is a collusion between the contractor and the officials and so on. I demand a thorough enquiry into this entire affair and I hope the Ashoka Hotel workers and employees, whatever demand is made, will stand by you. We shall stand by you. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Chairman. Before I sit down, I demand that a public enquiry be made into the entire episode.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Banka Behary Das. Brevity is rare commodity. I hope you will be brief.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: Madam, we shall extend the time by one hour, otherwise no Member can do justice to it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall see.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS (Orissa): Madam Deputy Chairman, I accuse the Government for three reasons. Firstly, there was no necessity for constructing a revolving tower, when the entire economy is now suffering because of dearth of funds. You know even now the Fourth Plan is being proposed to be reduced. You know most of the very important projects, including very important factories, cannot be set up or cannot be expanded in the public sector because the Government always says that they have no resources to meet those demands. So, when our resources are so inadequate, it is highly improper for the Government to go in for a revolving tower only to give some facilities to foreign tourists. If private hotels like Oberois can function without those facilities, the Ashoka Hotels too could do without it. Our economy cannot stand this heavy burden—at this hour, I accuse in this connection the Finance Minister. As you know, the Finance Minister, to meet the demands of the economy, is having additional taxes on tea, coffee, footwear and what not. When all these taxations are taking place, the Finance Ministry has approved this loan to Ashoka Hotels. I want to say about Ashoka Hotels that the entire capital and also the working capital has been provided by the Government of India. Also, this loan has been provided by the Government of India.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL (Punjab): Not the entire capital.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: To a great extent, if not the entire amount. So, when the Finance Minister says to the States that he has not enough money to meet the demands of the various States' Plans, when he has not enough money even for the public sector projects, it is

highly improper for the Finance Minister to accept the proposal of Ashoka Hotel. This is my first accusation. My second accusation is about the tender. All the tenders were incomplete. Mr. Bhargava here has admitted—might have been briefed by the Government—that it was all incomplete because . . .

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: Madam, I take strong objection to his saying 'briefed by the Government'. I have my own source of information. I said that if I had been the deciding authority I would have cancelled all the six tenders.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: I concede for the time being that he has not been briefed by the Government, but I again say that he has taken advantage of some technicalities. I would say that all the tenders were incomplete. If for various reasons the entire design was not complete, the Government had no business to call for tenders. The entire designing and other things were not complete. Secondly, the tender of this particular gentleman was incomplete if only because in his first tender he gave certain conditions which went contrary to the conditions that were given in the tender notice itself. So, when he had given certain conditions to Ashoka Hotels Limited, that tender was absolutely invalid and the Government should have rejected that tender outright. I here again say this. The Minister in the other House, I am told, has said that though these conditions were first advanced by the contractor, later on, during the period of negotiations they were withdrawn. It is for the Minister to give the reasons. When the tender was incomplete, it ought to have been rejected. And if the Minister thought that no tender was proper or valid, he should have called for a fresh tender and accepted the tender which was the lowest and also valid. So, for this reason also I want to accuse the Government that they have also favoured a particular contractor, whatever might be the rea-

son, whether he has any relation with the managing director or not. He was also the Chairman of the Heavy Electricals, Bhopal, during which time this particular contractor was favoured. So, all these reasons give enough scope for suspicion that this particular contractor has been favoured by the Department or Ashoka Hotels.

The third accusation, for which I am very sorry, is that the Minister should not have involved himself in this affair. We know the PWD code everywhere. We know how tenders are called. Even if it is a case for negotiation, it is the officials who conduct the negotiations.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: There was no negotiation. I had never said so.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: I will be happy, but here also I want to tell you that Ashoka Hotels Limited is an autonomous organisation. If any negotiation is to be conducted, it has to be conducted by the Managing Director himself. The Works Ministry does not come into the picture. Even the Secretary, Works, Housing and Supply Ministry, does not come into the picture. I am told—I stand to be corrected—here the Secretary of the Works, Housing and Supply Ministry and the Minister had involved themselves either directly or indirectly, which they should not have done. I would have been happy if the Managing Director of Ashoka Hotels would have involved himself in this affair and he would have come under the fire of this House. So, I want to attack and also accuse the Government that in this respect the proper procedure, the PWD code, has not been followed. Therefore, for all these reasons the tenders should have been rejected. I demand that it should be instituted just now, because all these irregularities have been committed by Ashoka Hotels Limited.

SHRI TRILOKI SINGH (Uttar Pradesh): Madam Deputy Chairman, I am afraid the very purpose of this discussion was lost by the hon. Mem-

ber who initiated the discussion. The simple question is why this construction of a luxury item was undertaken when we are short of funds, when our finances are so depleted. If I am to go by the statement of the hon. Member, who initiated it, it was to earn foreign exchange. All that I would like to submit in this connection is that foreign exchange can be earned in many better ways and in a better manner than running an inn. What is the hotel like? It is an inn. I would not like the Government of India to reduce itself to the position of an inn-keeper to earn foreign exchange. The second point is though there is nothing wrong about it, I do not think any respectable gentleman in this country at least has never been proud of running an inn.

HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

AN HON. MEMBER: There is nothing wrong in it. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI A. M. TARIQ (Jammu and Kashmir): He is running an inn and he has got himself elected to Rajya Sabha.

SHRI TRILOKI SINGH: The hon. Member has knowledge of inn-keepers, but unfortunately I have never had that privilege. The other question is of the contract given to a particular firm. This particular firm had not quoted for all the items that they were asked in the invitation to tender. One of the conditions of that invitation to tender was that incomplete tenders were liable to be rejected. I do not want to make a speech, but I want a specific answer to the question why the tender of a contractor which was incomplete was not rejected. One of the conditions of the invitation to tender was that incomplete tenders were liable to be rejected.

The second question that I would like to put through you, Madam, to the hon. Minister in charge of Housing is this. When one of the conditions of tender was that the tenderer had no authority to change the conditions

of the tender and if he did so, the tender was liable to be rejected. I want to know whether it is a fact or not that Messrs. Tirath Ram Ahuja & Co, the firm to which this tender was ultimately given, had changed the conditions of contract. If that was so, what was it that led the Managing Director of the Ashoka Hotels Ltd. or for the matter of that high-ups in the Housing Ministry not to reject this tender?

The third thing that I would most regretfully like to submit in this connection is this. Although I have had nothing to do with inn-keeping, I have had occasion to approve tenders for public works connected with Zilla Parishad, Corporation and so many other institutions long before many hon. Members who are here in this House have had anything to do with public works. My own experience is that if one does not stick to the conditions of the tender, then it is open to any one to accuse him or to have suspicion that there has been a shady deal. In a contract involving about Rs. 1 crore—it is my regret but I think I have got to say it and not make any secret of it—my own suspicion is, not only suspicion but I have strong grounds to believe, that there has been a shady deal so far as this contract is concerned. Therefore, Madam, I join in the suggestion made by my hon. friends, Shri Bhupesh Gupta and Shri Banka Behary Das, to institute an enquiry.

AN HON. MEMBER: I am sorry for Mr. Bhupesh Gupta.

SHRI TRILOKI SINGH: He may be sorry for Mr. Bhupesh Gupta but he should be equally sorry for the Government which has been responsible for this shady deal. I have nothing more to add. I would most humbly request the Minister concerned through you, Madam, that he should not make it a point of prestige. I know that the Government will go ahead with this tender, with this contract, because certain high-ups have got to be provided accommodation for some conference to be held there. Go ahead with the contract all

(Shri Triloki Singh.)

right, but hold an enquiry, and if the Government is not afraid, if it is sure that there has been no shady deal, that is all the more reason why it should concede an enquiry, and I hope an enquiry will be held. If an enquiry is held, whether anybody briefs me or not, I undertake to adduce evidence in support of the suspicion that I hold and to which I have given expression.

श्री रमेशचन्द्र शंकरराव खांडेकर (मध्य प्रदेश) . उप सभापति जी इस समय जो विवाद हो रहा है वह पिछले दिनों एक सवाल से उत्पन्न हुआ था । इस समय जो चर्चा हो रही है उसमें दो तीन प्रश्न मुख्य हैं । पहला सवाल यह है कि क्या इसकी आवश्यकता है ? मैं हमेशा इस मत का रहा हूँ कि इस प्रकार के व्हाइट एलीफेंट को कम से कम सरकार को अपने हाथ में नहीं लेना चाहिये । कहा जाता है कि हम विदेशी मुद्रा इसके द्वारा कमायेंगे लेकिन जहाँ जहाँ इस तरह से विदेशी मुद्रा की कमाई हुई वहाँ पर उसका किस तरह से दुरुपयोग किया गया, यह बात सब लोग अच्छी तरह से जानते हैं । तो मैं इस नतीजे पर पहुँचा हूँ कि सरकार के अपने जो रिसॉर्सेज हैं उनको इकट्ठा करके इस देश का डेवलपमेंट करना चाहिये वरना इसी तरह विदेशी मुद्रा कमाने को होड़ में रहे तो ज़िम्मेदार से हम पहले देखते आ रहे हैं कि विदेशी मुद्रा का दुरुपयोग किया गया है उम्मीद है कि इसमें भी होगा और इससे हमारे देश की आर्थिक स्थिति कमजोर हो जायेगी ।

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : What about the Ashoka Hotel itself?

श्री रमेशचन्द्र शंकरराव खांडेकर : अशोक होटल को बंद कर देना चाहिये और सरकार को इस तरह के काम अपने हाथ में नहीं लेने चाहिये । (Interruptions) इसके बारे में यह कहा जाता है कि अगले साल फरवरी में एक कांफ्रेंस यहाँ पर होगी जिसमें काफी बड़े बड़े लोग आयेंगे जिसकी वजह से यह चीज अशोक होटल में बनाई जा रही है ताकि उन लोगों के काम में आ सके । लेकिन मैं

पूछना चाहता हूँ कि इतना बड़ा एम०पी० का विटल भाई भवन है, कर्जन रोड में कई बड़ी इमारतें बनाई जा रही हैं, वहाँ पर इन लोगों को ठहराने की व्यवस्था क्यों नहीं की जाती है ? इस समय क्या आवश्यकता है कि अशोक होटल पर 87 लाख रुपये खर्च करने की ? जब यह बनकर तैयार हो जायेगा तो उसमें कितना खर्च होगा, इसकी कल्पना नहीं की जा सकती है । हम को अनुभव है कि सरकार इस तरह के कार्यों में खर्चा पहले कम बतलाती है । चम्बल बांध बनाते समय कहा गया था कि इस पर 70, 80 करोड़ रुपये खर्च आयेगा, लेकिन होते होते वह सौ करोड़ रुपये तक पहुँच गया और अब भी पूरा नहीं हुआ है । इसी प्रकार अभी तो कहा जा रहा है कि इसमें 87 लाख रुपये ही खर्च आयेगा, लेकिन इसके ऊपर जो रीविंग टावर सरकार बनाना चाहती है, अगर वह बना तो फिर उसमें कई करोड़ रुपये का खर्चा आयेगा, इसमें कोई सदेह नहीं है ।

हम को नवर्दा ब्रिज का अनुभव है । पहले इसके बारे में कहा जाता था कि इस पर 15 लाख रुपये खर्चा आयेगा लेकिन बाद में यह कहा गया कि स्टील महंगा हो गया है, फारेन एक्मचेज नहीं हैं दाम बढ़ गये हैं, मजदूरों को ज्यादा देना पड़ता है और इन कारणों से दाम बढ़ते ही जा रहे हैं जिसकी वजह से इस पर कम से कम दो तीन लाख ज्यादा खर्चा आयेगा । आज आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि हमारा वास्तविक आवश्यकताएँ क्या हैं ? जब हमारे देश की आर्थिक स्थिति अच्छी नहीं है, जब हम लोगों को अनाज नहीं दे सकते हैं, मकान नहीं दे सकते हैं, तो बड़े बड़े बाहर के लोगों को इतना बड़ा आलीशान मकान बनाकर रखने की क्या जरूरत है ?

तीसरी बात यह है कि जो कुछ मुझे इस बारे में बातें मालूम हुई हैं वह बाहर से हुई हैं क्योंकि मुझे इसके बारे में व्यक्तिगत जानकारी नहीं है । मंत्री जी ने खुद कहा कि एक टेन्डर इनकम्पलीट होते हुए भी उसको मंजूर कर

निया गया। तो मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि इस तरह के टेंडर को मंजूर क्यों किया गया? जब दूसरे टेंडर इनकम्पलीट आये थे तो सब को कनिमल कर दिया जाता और दुबारा टेंडर काल किये जाते और फिर जो जाव्ते की कार्य-वाही होती उसको किया जाता। इसमें वाकई कोई गोलमाल हुआ है, इसमें जरूर कुछ काला है और इसकी जांच होनी बहुत आवश्यक है। आप इस तरह की जांच कोई न्यायाधीश द्वारा कराइये, पार्लियामेंट द्वारा कराइये या फिर इंडिपेंडेंट कमिशन नियुक्त करके कराइये, लेकिन उसकी जांच अवश्य होनी चाहिये। अगर कोई प्राइवेट सेक्टर होता तो उसमें सरकार यह बात नहीं देखती, लेकिन यह तो पब्लिक अन्डरटेकिंग है, उसमें अगर कोई गोलमाल होता है, तो हम समझते हैं कि उसमें एक धब्बा लग गया है। (Interruptions) आप सोशलाइजेशन की बात कहते हैं। हमारे जो पब्लिक अन्डरटेकिंग्स हैं, जैसे भोपाल में हैवीइलक्ट्रिकल है, उसको 10 साल हो गये हैं उसमें घाटा ही दिखलाया जा रहा है। अगर पब्लिक सेक्टर में इस तरह से गोलमाल होगा तो जनता का समाजवाद से विश्वास उठ जायेगा। पब्लिक सेक्टर का तो "सीजर्स बाइफ इज अबव सस्पिशन" होना चाहिये। इस प्रकार जो पब्लिक के अन्डरटेकिंग्स हैं उनका दायित्व बढ़ जाता है और अगर उनमें गोलमाल होता है तो फिर जनता का विश्वास ही हट जाता है। तो मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि इसमें जो गोलमाल है मंत्री जी को खुद उसकी जांच करनी चाहिये। इस प्रकार का डिनकसन करना और इस प्रकार की मांग करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। अगर जांच के बाद इसमें कोई शड़ी डील मालम नहीं हुई तो सरकार का ही नाम होगा और पब्लिक सेक्टर पर जनता का विश्वास बड़ेगा। इसलिए यह आवश्यक है कि अगर पब्लिक सेक्टर और समाजवाद को बचाना है तो कम से कम इस प्रकार के कामों की जांच की जानी चाहिये ताकि लोगों के मन में शंका न रहे कि पब्लिक सेक्टर में इस तरह का घपला होता है।

SHRI M. M. DHARIA (Maharashtra): Madam Deputy Chairman, at the outset, I would like to deplore in the strongest possible terms the activities of such contractors who have tried to take advantage of this august forum for bringing up such issues. It should not be like that. Secondly, the Ashoka Hotels is a public sector undertaking—I believe in the public sector. The performance of the Ashoka Hotel has definitely improved, it has been improving every day, and I feel that this House should stand by this public sector. Of course, I would like to make it very clear that I am not happy over the procedure that has been adopted at the time of this tender. It was only on the 10th April, 1967 that the tenders were opened. I do not know why the tenders were not called earlier because we wanted to utilise the opportunity of the UNCTAD Conference to be held in 1968. Had it happened so, there would have been no occasion for having any haste in this respect. Madam, however, I feel that there is nothing shady because the other day the hon. Minister has made it clear that he has consulted the Deputy Prime Minister and the Finance Minister and others. When they have been consulted in this connection, when the leaders are taken into confidence by the Managing Board, I feel . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: How does it come?

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: Let me have my say.

When all these top leaders in whose character and qualities we all have faith have been consulted in the matter, I am of the opinion that there is nothing shady. However, I would like to appeal to the hon. Minister to take more care in such matters. At the same time, I feel that having regard to the tender and the various terms that are put on the Government, it may be that this amount which has been agreed to may not be the amount, and it may vary to any extent. So, the hon.

[Shri M. M. Dharia.]

Minister should take care to see that this amount does not exceed as such a fear has been expressed by many of us.

Then, I would also like to suggest to the hon. Minister for Works, Housing and Supply that if we want to get rid of the contractors, the only course open is to have our own departmental construction activities so that we are not a victim of or we are not bullied by such private contractors.

So far as the roving tower is concerned, I would like to make it clear that I am not opposed to the roving tower. I am surely of the opinion that we should march with the modern world; we should have all those modern activities as in those other countries. But as I said the other day, I do feel that the Government should examine the priorities as to where we should invest, whether we should invest in the revolving tower first or not. There are some other forms wherein we can invest. If I am to quote, in my own State there are 250 small irrigation projects which are just now ready and if we can get an amount of Rs. 11 crores within one year to come, we shall not come to the Centre for a single bag of foodgrains for our State. When we have been spending Rs. 150 crores in importing foodgrains and when we have been spending the valuable foreign exchange, instead of that, if we could have these priorities and invest on such good schemes which are more essential for this country, the food problems might be solved. I entirely agree with my hon. friend, Mr. Banka Behary Das when he said that when we have been failing in fulfilling or satisfying the basic needs of the people, if we are not going to take into consideration the priorities, we are not going according to our own aims and ideals.

Madam, my last point is regarding the style of conducting hotel business here. I was in Japan and I could see that the hotels run on Japanese style there were costlier for

the foreigners but at the same time they were more popular also. Why should we not try on those lines in our country also? Why should we go on imitating the foreigners in all respects? With our own country's heritage and culture, we could have our own imagination and we can no doubt run this industry on our Indian pattern, which can be an ideal pattern in the whole world. It is in that direction that we should move. I would like to say this. Now that the Conference is to take place, let this public sector project not suffer. Let it go ahead. But at the same time, all these precautions should be taken, for the time being and also for the future.

Thank you very much.

DR. (MRS.) MANGLADEVI TALWAR (Rajasthan): Madam Deputy Chairman, I agree that more accommodation in hotels—more beds and more rooms—is necessary to attract the tourists and also in view of the fact that a conference is going to take place here. In August, 1966, the Department of Tourism felt that they wanted one thousand additional beds at least for the next two or three years. Madam, I do not agree with Mr. Khandekar and others who have expressed the view that we should shut down the Ashoka Hotel. Ashoka Hotel is one of the most attractive places and it has justified, more than justified, its existence during the last so many years, and an extension of it would only add to the attraction of the foreign tourists who come to this country. And therefore, it would help us to earn more foreign exchange which is so badly needed for the economy of our country. The cost of it, I do not know. But as some of the hon. Members have said, it might be much more than indicated now. However, we have to take the figure which is indicated here; it is 6.85 lakhs.

Madam, I would like to say that it has been alleged that the tenders were opened in a hurry and that the

whole deal took place within a few hours, on one evening, and it is also alleged that one person of the firm to whom the contract has been given was also present. In view of the fact that the hon. Members are very sensitive and also the public at large is very sensitive at this time about the good behaviour of the Government, all our deals should be above suspicion. The Ashoka Hotel is one of the public sector projects. I believe in public sector projects. Therefore I feel that the Government and the hon. Minister should look into this matter and if there is any thing in it, they should clear the suspicion in the minds of the hon. Members and also of the public at large. There is no harm in doing that. Whatever action they feel is appropriate and necessary should be taken in this direction because the question has been raised more than once in this House, and a definite allegation has been made by different hon. Members.

Thank you.

5 P.M.

श्री जगत नारायण (हरियाणा) : मैडम डिप्टी चेयरमैन, इस पर एक तो मेरी यह शिकायत है कि यह सवाल मेरे नाम पर था और मैंने ही दरखास्त की थी ...

श्री एम० एम० धारिया : हमारे भी नाम पर था ।

श्री जगत नारायण : आपका भी नाम था, लेकिन मेरा नाम पहले था तो चाहिये यह था कि मुझे पहले मौका दिया जाता इसके ऊपर बोलने के लिये । खैर, वह तो जैसा आपका कानून है, उसके मुताबिक है ।

मैं बड़े अदब के साथ वजीर साहब से चार पांच सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ । मैं अपने वक्त में ही खत्म कर दूंगा, सिर्फ चार पांच सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ ।

मेरा पहला सवाल यह है कि इसको

अखबारों में क्यों मुश्तहिर नहीं किया गया ? मैं भी मिनिस्टर रह चुका हूँ, हैल्थ का, ट्रांसपोर्ट का और एजुकेशन का और अपने वक्त में काफी बिगिडगे बनवाई है, तो इसको अखबारों में मुश्तहिर क्यों नहीं किया गया, जबकि मैं समझता हूँ कि हर काम मुश्तहिर होता है, हर टेंडर अखबारों में मुश्तहिर होता है । तो यह क्यों नहीं किया गया और सिर्फ चन्द आदमियों को क्यों टेंडर भेजा गया ? भार्गव साहब ने कहा कि चन्द आदमियों को इसलिये भेजा गया कि वह काम जल्दी में करवाना था । मुझे समझ नहीं आया कि आज अखबारों में दिया जाए कि एक हफ्ते के अन्दर टेंडर आना चाहिये, तो एक हफ्ते के अन्दर टेंडर आ जाता है और आप देखें कि जितने टेंडर देने वाले हैं, वे दिल्ली के हैं और बाहर से भी बहुत अच्छे अच्छे वर्थवाइल कांट्रैक्टर थे, जो कि टेंडर दे सकते थे, लेकिन उनमें से किसी को भी इश्यू नहीं किया गया । अगर अखबार में देते तो सबको अपना चांस मिलता । ऐसा इसलिये किया गया कि चार पांच आदमी के, कांट्रैक्टर के, ही टेंडर आये, ऐसे में चार पांच टेंडर ही आते रहते हैं, उन्हीं के जो कि उनके आदमी होते हैं । इसलिये अखबारों में इसको देना निहायत जरूरी था । क्यों नहीं अखबारों में दिया गया ।

दूसरा सवाल मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि टेंडर शाम को चार बजे खोला और रात के दस बजे जिसने टेंडर दिया था, उस से दस्तखत करावा लेना यानी सिर्फ 6 घंटे के अन्दर, ऐसा क्यों । मैडम, इसमें एक क्लॉज है कि 10 दिन के अन्दर साइन करेगा तो एक दिन होता, दो दिन होता, तीन दिन होता, लेकिन चार, छः घंटों के अन्दर अन्दर टेंडर साइन किया गया, इससे यह मालूम होता है कि अशोका होटल के जो चेयरमैन थे, वह बहुत एक्शंस थे कि तीरथ राम एंड कम्पनी को ही

[श्री जगन् नारायण]

यह दे, क्योंकि उन्होंने उनका मकान सस्ते दाम पर बनवाया, बनवा कर दिया था, जो कि मैंने पहले अर्ज की थी। मैं समझता हूँ कि आज तक कहीं हिस्ट्री में नहीं हुआ कि एक करोड़ का टेंडर हो और चार घंटे में उस पर दस्तखत हो जाय कि उसका टेंडर मंजूर कर लिया।

तीसरा सवाल मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि यह वजीर साहब किस तरह से बीच में आये। मैं समझता हूँ, जहाँ तक मेरी इतिला है, जैसा कि मेरे दोस्त बाकें बिहारी दास ने कहा, टेंडर में वजीर बिल्कुल नहीं आता है, टेंडर के खोलने में या टेंडर के देने में या उस पर अपने दस्तखत करने में, वजीर को मिर्फ़ इनफार्म कर दिया जाता है और वज़ार को उसी वक्त दखल देना चाहिये, जबकि वजीर के पाम शिकायत आये कि यह टेंडर गलत तरीके से खोला गया है या इसमें यह बाकायदगी नहीं हुई है then the Minister comes in और मैं हेरान हूँ कि उन्होंने उस दिन सप्लीमेंटरी में अपने जवाब में यह कहा था :—

“May I submit that when the Board of Directors of the Ashoka Hotels accepted this tender of Tirath Ram Ahuja and Company, it came to me for approval? Then I met the Finance Minister and had consultations with him and I directed the Ashoka Hotels Board of Directors to ask the contractor to reduce it by Rs. 2,40,000 and it was given to him.”

मिनिस्टर कैसे दखल दे सकता है? उन्होंने उनको यह कहा कि आप दो लाख, ढाई लाख रुपया छोड़ दें ताकि लोएस्ट टेंडर वाले हो जावे, तो आपको दे दिया जाय। मैं समझता हूँ कि मिनिस्टर साहब इस तरह से दखल नहीं दे सकते हैं। तो उन्होंने कैसे दखल दिया? मेरे दिल में बड़ी इज्जत राव साहब के लिये है और इकबाल साहब तो मेरे अपने पंजाब के अजीज हैं, तो इनको इन

बातों में कोई दखल नहीं देना चाहिये। मगर मैं यह ज़रूर कहना चाहता हूँ कि अशोका होटल लिमिटेड के जो चेयरमैन हैं—यह सारी सरकारी कर्सन है नहीं, यह कंसर्न प्राइवेट लिमिटेड है और उसमें गवर्नमेंट के 51 परसेंट शेयर होंगे या इसमें ज्यादा होंगे . . .

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: It is a public limited company.

श्री जगन् नारायण कम्पनी पब्लिक लिमिटेड है, तो वजीर साहब का दखल क्यों। यह फाइनेंस मिनिस्टर के पास गये। Why he ran about it? इससे यह शक पैदा होता है कि इनके अफसरान ने इनको मिसगाइड किया और इनसे जल्दी से जल्दी फैसला कराने की कोशिश की। मैं समझता हूँ कि इसके मुतालिक वजीर साहब को ज़रूर रोशनी डालनी चाहिये। क्यों कि इनके इस तरह दखल देने से इन पर शक का इजहार होता है। मैं समझता हूँ कि वजीर साहब को इसकी सफाई करनी चाहिये, इसके मुतालिक ज़रूर अपने आपको साफ करना चाहिये, how he came in, यह किस तरह से आ गये, यह आ नहीं सकते थे।

चौथी बात मैं यह उनसे पूछना चाहता हूँ कि जब टेंडर इनकम्प्लीट था, आपके टेंडर के मुताबिक नहीं था, तो फिर आपने इस टेंडर को क्यों कबूल किया और मैं इस राय का हूँ जैसा कि भार्गव साहब ने कहा, बाकी सब साहेबान ने भी कहा कि इस वक्त भी आपको सब टेंडर्स को नामंजूर कर देना चाहिये, चाहे जितने भी टेंडर देने वाले हों। मैं समझता हूँ कि यह कोई ऐसी बात नहीं है, अगर आपका रश आफ वर्क है, तो भी इस पर टेंडर मगवाइये और ऐसे मौके आते हैं कि जो काम बहुत जल्दी करना होता है तो जो लोएस्ट टेंडर होता है उसके मुताबिक तमाम कांट्रक्टर्स में वह बांट देते हैं ताकि जल्दी काम खत्म हो जाय। तो आप दुबारा

टेंडर मंगाइये और जो लोएस्ट टेंडर हो, उसके मुताबिक बांट कर के आप काम को जल्दी करवा सकते हैं और इस होटल को तैयार करा सकते हैं। क्या इसके मुताबिक भी वजीर साहब कुछ सोचने की कोशिश करेंगे।

SHRI NIREN GHOSH (West Bengal): Madam Deputy Chairman, I think the whole idea of the Annexe and the revolving tower, if possible, should be dropped even now. It is said that an international conference is scheduled to be held. So an Annexe has to be constructed. Suppose next year another international conference is going to be held; you would like to have another Annexe and another revolving tower. It is ridiculous.

Secondly, every one of us knows that in contracts covering lakhs and crores of rupees there are shady deals. Generally, it is tried that things do not get exposed. But somehow or other shady things come to light. We have a duty to expose such things thoroughly and to catch the culprit. And I do think that it would be meet and proper that this forum is utilised for this purpose because the thing is connected with a public sector undertaking.

Thirdly, it is alleged that some high-up in private business, the D.C.M., Mr. Ratnam, is connected with it. They should never be on the Board of Directors. I want an assurance from the Government that persons connected with private business or their Board of Directors or high officials would never be placed on the Board of Directors of a public sector undertaking.

My fourth point is that there should be no selective tenders. Every tender must be opened as general tender. The practice of selective tenders should be abolished forthwith.

Coming to the Annexe, what is the accommodation? It is at the most

10' x 12'. For 150 such rooms a sum of Rs. 51 lakhs has been sanctioned. It is not a new construction; it is an addition, and unfurnished at that. The total cost of it would come to Rs. 10-15 lakhs. But you have given a contract for Rs. 51 lakhs. Is it not suspicious?

Finally, the revolving tower. Yes, there are revolving towers in Western countries. But they are meant for those who want to have a show of beer or whisky. Private businessmen generally avail themselves of the luxury of these revolving towers. But if you had a mind to construct a revolving tower, why did you not give it to a public contractor and allowed him to run it commercially. And whenever you required it you could take advantage of that. Otherwise, why have a show-piece? They are meant for Western, white people who are going to come here.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Our kitchen Cabinet will revolve there.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: I do not think you want to have a show of whisky or beer at this revolving tower. At least our Government should not indulge in such things. But if at all you had an idea of having a revolving tower, you could give it to a private contractor. Let him run it. But I do not like it to be put up at the Ashoka Hotel. This lowers our prestige.

श्री निरंजन वर्मा : आदरणीय उपसभापति जी, अशोक होटल का जब से जन्म हुआ है, तब से देश की जनता के लिये यह बड़ा विवादास्पद रहा है। पहले तो लाखों रुपया इस पर खर्च हुआ, फिर इसके पश्चात् बाहर के लोग जो यहां आते थे, उनके लिये भारतीय भोजन और भारतीय संस्कृति की बातें दूर रहीं, यहां पर तरह तरह का विदेशी माल और गोमांश तक खिलाने का यत्न किया गया। इसके पश्चात् भी अब ऐसा समय आया है

[श्री निरंजन वर्मा]

जब करोड़ों रुपये की मुद्रा इस पर खर्च की जाने वाली है।

आदरणीय उपसभापति जी, हमें इसमें किसी प्रकार का आश्चर्य नहीं होता, अगर अमरीका की तरह इम्पायर स्टेट बिल्डिंग बनाने के लिये या लंदन का ब्रिज टावर या फ्रेंच टावर की तरह कोई बड़ी बिल्डिंग बनायी जाती, उसमें हम हर्ष व्यक्त करते। लेकिन उन देशों में जहां बड़ी बड़ी इस प्रकार की चीजें बनाई गई है, उन देशों में आर्थिक स्थिति बहुत अच्छी थी। हमारे देश में आर्थिक स्थिति बहुत खराब है। हमारे इस देश में अगर विदेशी मेहमान आएँ, तो केवल विदेशी मेहमानों के लिये हम करोड़ों रु० खर्च कर दें, तो कभी अच्छी बात नहीं हो सकती। हमारे मंत्रालय ने जो भूलें की हैं अभी हमारे योग्य मित्रों ने उनकी तरफ ध्यान दिलाया। इसमें बहुत जल्दबाजी की गई, टेन्डर दिलाने में जल्दबाजी की गई और एक ऐसे व्यक्ति जिसको स्वयं अशोक होटल के निर्माण का कार्य दिया गया था, उसी के लिये दोबारा टेन्डर दिया गया।

एक बात और हमारा मंत्रालय भूल गया। अगर यह मंत्रालय अशोक होटल के मैनेजर को कोई ऐसी शराब बनाने के लिये कह देता कि हमारे नये मेहमान उस शराब को पीकर यह बात भूल जाते कि यह देश जो हमारी मेहमाननवाजी कर रहा है, यह सारा रुपया ऋण के रूप में उनके देश से दुर्भाग्यवश हमारे देश में आता है और उस शराब को पीने के बाद वह शायद यह भूल जाता कि इस देश में उनके लिये जो कैक्स खाने के लिये मिल रहे हैं, यह हमारे देश का नहीं है बल्कि अमरीका के पी० एल० 480 ऋण से प्राप्त गेहूँ से भोजन मिल रहा है और शायद वह शराब पीने के बाद यह बात एक क्षण को भूल जाता कि इस देश में बिहार में और उत्तर प्रदेश में करोड़ों व्यक्ति भूख से मर रहे हैं और हमारे इस देश में करोड़ों रुपये का इस तरह से अपव्यय हो रहा है, तो शायद

बहुत अच्छी बात होती। हम समझते हैं, हमारा मंत्रालय इस ओर उदासीन नहीं रहेगा। जितना आवश्यक खर्च है उसे अवश्य किया जाना चाहिये, लेकिन जितना अनावश्यक खर्च है, उसके लिये ऐसे समय में जब कि बाहर से हम ऋण ले रहे हैं, हमारे देश में भुखमरी है, तो एक भी पैसा खर्च करने की इजाजत नहीं दी जानी चाहिये। हम समझते हैं, मंत्रालय इस ओर ध्यान देगा।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have ten names with me and I will call one by one if you have patience. But please keep within the time-limit.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: If you will permit, I will just take two or three minutes. Madam, I want to make it very clear that the question that I am interested in is to promote tourism in this country. As one who has some experience of the life in Switzerland and in other countries, I would say that, not only for the purpose of getting foreign exchange which is very important, but also to give greater opportunities and facilities to people from all parts of the world to come to my country and to remain here comfortably, there is no doubt that there is a great demand for creating . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But they come with the knowledge that we are depending on American P.L. 480 wheat . . .

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: No, neither for America nor for the Soviet Union. Forget it for the time being. We want the tourist industry to be encouraged and for that, it is necessary that the hotel accommodation should be extended to a considerable extent. In the same way, air passage and railway accommodation should be improved and such centres which would attract the people and would give them a real holiday and an insight into the culture of India, should be created. That is very necessary. For that purpose, I fully

support the extension of the Ashoka Hotel. The other part is I am not at all happy at the way in which this has gone and I think, this being public money and we being the custodians of public money, it is our duty to see that there is nothing suspicious about it. Regarding this part of the matter, I fully agree with my friends that an enquiry should be made into this case.

SHRI M. S. OBEROI (Bihar): Madam, Deputy Chairman, the Ashoka Hotel was built in 1956. This hotel has accommodation for about 350 rooms and 450 beds, with extensive public room areas and facilities. I personally think that the Ashoka Hotel is one of our good hotels in the Capital of India. I also think that the Ashoka Hotel Management—the Board of Directors—was very wise to take steps to add more accommodation to the hotel. And this additional accommodation, as you know, is urgently required in the principal towns of India including Delhi, particularly for the fact that the Jumbo Jets carrying 400 passengers, with a speed of 600 miles an hour, will be in operation in 1971. The Air-India has already placed an order for four big jets at a cost of Rs. 83 crores. It is a coincidence that the added accommodation at the Ashoka Hotel will be used for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development which is to be held in January-March 1968, when about 2,000 delegates will be arriving in Delhi. It was just a coincidence. Otherwise the added accommodation was needed not only in this city, but in all the big cities of India. As a matter of fact, by the addition of 150 rooms or 350 beds, the Management has saved about Rs. 2 crores. You would ask me how. They had a scheme to build the Akbar Hotel which would have cost Rs. 3 crores. The Board of Directors thought 'rather than spending Rs. 3 crores, why not have an annexe in the Ashoka Hotel itself at a cost of not more than, say, Rs. 1½ crores?' So actually they have saved about Rs. 2 crores. They have scrapped that scheme of Akbar Hotel.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But what about us? We have been evicted; our party office and our residences had to be shifted on the ground that the Akbar Hotel would be built there. Mr. Kamaraj also had to move out. Now we hear that it is scrapped. Shall we have a football ground there?

SHRI M. S. OBEROI: So the Board of Directors, Madam Deputy Chairman, have saved about Rs. 2 crores by deciding to build this annexe to the Ashoka Hotel and all the hon. Members would be glad that they have saved Rs. 2 crores . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Muhammad bin Tughlaks.

SHRI AWADHESHWAR PRASAD SINHA (Bihar): But you see a private sector man is supporting the public sector. You should be glad about it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I know why he is doing it. He is going to have it and he will ask for permit....

(Interruptions)

SHRI M. S. OBEROI: Madam, I have noted down a few lines and I will quickly read them. About the revolving tower, there has been a lot of discussion over this item of expense on the tower. I have been to a number of countries in the world and I have seen revolving restaurants; the last one built was in one of the hotels in Tokyo. The extra cost is only that of the mechanism. There is no other extra cost because when the tower is built, the whole building comes up. Out of this Rs. 51 lakhs, the mechanism is the only extra cost and it would come to only Rs. 4 to 5 lakhs. There should be no doubt that this is an added attraction to the visitors residing, particularly the tourists but again it depends upon good management to operate such a restaurant and the return one expects. I personally think that one can get a better return by a additional guest

[Shri M. S. Oberoi]
rooms. However, it is a matter of opinion, and the decision should be left with the management. I am coming to tenders.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: The private sector never believes in tenders.

SHRI M. S. OBEROI: Tenders were invited and as I can see, the tie is between Messrs. Uttam Singh Dugal and Company and Messrs. Tirath Ram Ahuja and Company, Private, Limited. The difference is only Rs. 2 lakhs and Messrs. Tirath Ram Ahuja and Company have agreed to accept the lowest figure. So instead of Rs. 87 lakhs and Rs. 89 lakhs, the Minister and the Board of Directors made him agree to come to Rs. 87 crores so that the difference between the two tenders and the tie between the two was only Rs. 2 lakhs and Rs. 2 lakhs on a project of Rs. 2 crores is a very small amount which is not very considerable. The objection as appears to me is that Messrs. Uttam Singh Dugal and Co. should have been given the contract whose figure was Rs. 87 lakhs as against Rs. 89 lakhs. Both these firms are outstanding contracting firms, in India. I think what weighed with the management was that Messrs. Tirath Ram Ahuja & Co. originally built the Ashoka Hotel and it was built within the record period of 12 months' time to house the UNESCO Conference, which ordinarily for a hotel of that size it should have taken more than 3 years. There seems to be a good case for the Ministry of Housing to award this contract to the party in view of the urgency for completion of the Annexe building in time for the forthcoming Conference.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The link is Mr. Rathnam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You must finish now. I cannot give you more time.

SHRI M. S. OBEROI: To provide more beds in the capital city is the urgency of the day and I have no doubt that our dynamic Minister of

Tourism and Aviation, Dr. Karan Singh, with all his enthusiasm and foresight will see that we reach the target shared both by the public and private sectors.

Our urgent need is to earn foreign exchange and we cannot achieve this goal until and unless all such schemes are taken in hand and completed without any loss of time.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: Nationalise Oberoi's . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Wonderful, for once the private sector tycoon is supporting the public sector.

SHRI AWADHESHWAR PRASAD SINHA: It is the goodwill between the two sectors. You want strife and class war. We want goodwill between the two.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra): I request the attention of the House to look at this problem in two ways. One is that we are looking to the performance of a public sector industry and I am surprised to see that when we are criticising the Government for not efficiently working the public sector, the main contention or point is, we are not giving a free hand to the public sector undertakings to take their own decisions. I am really surprised that when the management of the Ashoka Hotels, Limited, whoever it might be, has taken a decision to build something to increase the profitability and to earn more foreign exchange, on what ground are we objecting to this? Another point is about the priorities. I may bring to the notice of the House that I can understand about priorities for irrigation and for all other developmental activities but when this hotel industry is earning foreign exchange, what is the reason to object to such an investment when the much-needed foreign exchange can be earned? I can agree with Mr. Dharia when he says that instead of having such a lavish hotel, is there not any other pattern of having the Indian culture connected with the hotel industry? That is another point to be studied

by the management of the Ashoka Hotels to see that the Indian culture is reflected and as in Japan, the hotels are on a cheaper basis and not on such a lavish scale. I see in the way tenders are decided, there is something to be desired. It seems that the tenders were not properly routed and the tender for Rs. 87 lakhs should have been considered a hundred times. We in the districts, when dealing with road and irrigation works, take so much care to look at the correctness of the tenders. I do feel that there is a necessity for going through how the tenders were decided and in what fashion they were decided but I will request the House that we must always back up the public sector and give the maximum protection to the man who works in the public sector as the Head of the Board of Directors.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL (Punjab): Madam, I had no mind to speak on this but some irrelevant remarks have been made by the hon. Minister of Works in the Lok Sabha this morning and so answer I must. He has been pleased to mention there that the lowest tender has not been accepted because there were some adverse remarks against that firm. I challenge that statement. There is no fact in that.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: On a point of order. As per my information, the hon. Member is an interested party. Will it be fair on the part of the hon. Member to defend his cause where he is having his self-interest in this August House? I am opposed to this sort of argument being made here. He can use this forum for criticising the procedure and all that but if he is going to say that way, he should be prohibited from speaking. What is this House?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Dugal, you must be objective.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: I was referring to certain remarks and I said that I challenge that statement.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: On a point of order. Through you . . .

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: The statement the Minister made in the Lok Sabha I am referring to...

(Interruptions)

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: I would appeal to the hon. Member that he should not participate in this.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I can understand the indignation of Mr. Dharia about big contractors and others. I understand and I share but there is a saying that when big people quarrel against each other, honest men come in to their own. Therefore let them quarrel a little and we will know more about these.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Dugal, I request you to be as objective as you can without any reference to what has happened in the other House. What has happened in the other place?

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: Mr. Bhargava while moving this motion for our consideration, made a statement to say that the lowest tenderer's work was not satisfactory and that was the reason why this tender was given. He has every right to repudiate that

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You continue, Mr. Dugal.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: The hon. Minister on the 7th made a statement in this House that I approached him in relation to this tender and it was his courtesy that the tender was issued. I also challenge this. As a matter of right this tender was issued to this firm and it is not a courtesy. I did call on him and I told him: 'This is irregular, this is not correct that some firm should be selected and others should be deprived of the work.'

On the other hand, the hon. Minister made a statement also, Madam, that the tender has been issued to some reputed and big firm. If the

(Shri Uttam Singh Dugal)

tender has been issued to some reputed firm why should the lowest tender have been rejected. They should have seen at the time of the tender whether this firm was a reputed firm or not. As a matter of fact, if I may say this, the hon. Minister is new to the Ministry and he has been wrongly briefed by certain officials in this case. I would strongly request the hon. Minister to go into this question very carefully. As a matter of fact, for tenders to be accepted, the Government of India has made certain rules and laws, and we abide by them. The main issue before this House is not whether this contract has gone to Messrs. Tirathram Ahuja, or anybody else. The main issue before the House is that an illegal tender has been accepted and why it has been accepted. The hon. Minister should go into this.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: Madam, if I may say, I would like to deplore this sort of using this floor by a Member who is a concerned member in this industry. Why should he be allowed to use this floor in this manner? I would like to lodge my protest against this. We should not allow this sort of convention in this House. One who is interested should not participate in such discussions. I would like to lodge my protest. He said, "It is illegal" and he is a member who applied for the contract.

(Interruptions)

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: I have not tendered. The firm has tendered; I have not tendered. You are very wrong in this. I have not tendered. I have nothing to do with it. So my submission to you, Madam, is this.

सरदार रघुबीर सिंह पंजहजारी (पंजाब):
मैडम डिप्टी चेरमैन, यह रांग प्रोसीजर एडाप्ट किया जा रहा है कि जो इंट्रस्टेड आदमी है, जो टेंडर देने जाय, लेकिन उसको काम न दिया जाय तो वह इस हाउस में आ कर के इस तरह से बात करे। आज उन्होंने यह किया, कल और कोई आ कर के यही

कर सकता है। इसलिये इनको नहीं भलाऊ करना चाहिये इस किस्म की बात करने के लिये।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have told him to be objective. Please continue. You have just a minute and a half. Please finish.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In that case Congress people are also interested.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: Therefore I would submit that in accepting that illegal tender injustice has been done, harm has been done to the various other contractors who have tendered, who had tendered for this. My request to the hon. Minister would be that he should go into this question and see for himself why those other tenders had not been accepted. Supposing the lowest tender was not accepted because there was an adverse report against the tender, what about the second, third, fourth? And why were they not called, and why were they not consulted even they were issued the tender? My submission to you, Madam, is this, that it was a pre-arranged thing, because the work of constructing this annexe by the side of this Hotel was awarded to Messrs Tirathram Ahuja before tenders were called for. What does this show? What is it behind this?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now your time is running out.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: Therefore, Madam, I would request you to kindly ask . . .

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: Madam, why do you allow the hon. Member, who is one of the interested parties, to speak like this, and create such precedents?

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Why not?
DR. M. M. S. SIDDHU (Uttar Pradesh): It only shows, in my opinion, that it is a case for further enquiry.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: We are hearing both sides. Government is also a party.

DR. B. N. ANTANI: Madam Deputy Chairman, I have listened to the whole debate. I will even agree with the premises of the first speaker in this debate, because I happened to be an erstwhile Minister under my master who first sponsored this project, namely the Ashoka Hotel. I do have vision. I share his ambitions. Let there be a good revolving tower. Let this Hotel be the best in the world. I have no quarrel with it. I am not a Puritan but I certainly believe in purity and clean administration so far as the construction of these works is concerned. So many things have been said. I have found not one sentence, not one justification, in the debate, in the speeches of some of the sponsors on this side. It is sufficient for me to say that, if this Government has any consideration left for their prestige and reputation and integrity, and for the confidence of the people on whose votes they govern sitting on these Benches here, this is an instance which requires scrutiny and action. Caesar's wife must be above suspicion.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is apparent that this, Caesar's wife belongs to Congressmen.

DR. B. N. ANTANI: Now let me finish, Mr. Gupta. If this Government desires to survive with some reputation left, this is a case which must be scrutinised and which must be left to the committee for a final decision.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: We should like to examine it.

DR. B. N. ANTANI: Is a man of seventy-six, Madam—I am not young . . .

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: No, no you look very young.

DR. B. N. ANTANI: . . . may I remind you that I have some experience of public works, and even at

this stage, if this whole question of the competing claims of these tenders is re-examined, and the tender given to the best tenderer, the work, for the purposes of the conference, as visualised, will be finished without any hitch or hindrance if there is still some efficiency left in those who govern the country. On the other hand, if they want to have a shady deal, or if they want to do things, or have things done, in a partisan manner, then their days are numbered for this Government in so far as their integrity and the confidence of the people in them are concerned.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have seven more names here and I am going to go in the order of those names. Dr. Siddhu. (*After a pause*) (*As Dr. Siddhu did not rise to speak*) You do not want to say anything, I take it. Mrs. Rajagopalan.

SHRIMATI LALITHA (RAJAGOPALAN) (Madras): Madam Deputy Chairman, I endorse the view expressed by my colleague in the opposition. On the other hand, I have no objection in having this revolving tower. But this scheme should be started on a clean slate. At the same time, I also agree with what Mr. Oberoi said, namely, that if it is earning foreign exchange for us, then it is really essential. But I view it from a different angle altogether, from the practical point of view. In view of the present grave economic situation I think that this scheme should be shelved for some time at least. When we have been hesitating on projects like fertilizers, as a matter of policy, and on other things which are more essential for the country, and when we have been shelving some of the major and important projects because we have to have foreign collaboration, when such things are hanging in the balance, I think, from the public point of view, if we construct this revolving tower, though it is a benefit from the point of view of the Housing Minister that it may earn foreign exchange, it is something which the public will not

[Shrimati Lalitha (Rajagopalan)]

let go without a protest, and just at the present moment it will only look that it is something which is really throwing dust in the public eye. When we see at the present moment that people are dying of starvation and deaths are taking place in Bihar and other places, and that people are not even provided with proper housing accommodation in this capital city itself and that the poorest among them are living in the drainage pipes and other things if we are to create this revolving tower at this moment, I want you to imagine what the reaction of the people to it would be. I am only saying this from the point of view of the common people. At the same time I also endorse the point made by the Housing Minister that it would earn foreign exchange. But the point is whether it is proper for us at this moment to carry on with this thing. I would advise the Housing Minister to keep this scheme alive but at the same time put it into cold storage for some time.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Madam Deputy Chairman, I am not concerned with the contractors. I am, however, concerned with the propriety and the procedure adopted in giving the contract. I would have been happy if the Government had shown more foresight and the plans had been made earlier and the tenders had been called after due publicity had been given in the press and so on. But sorry as I am that this was not done, I find there is nothing to suspect the bona fides of those in charge of giving the tender. The Minister with full responsibility has said more than once in this House and in the other place that the lowest tenderer was not considered desirable. This discretion we must give to the people in charge of the affairs of this hotel or of any other project. A small difference of a lakh or two in such a big scheme is something which we can easily ignore and condone, if those in charge of accepting the tender feel that between two parties one is more reliable than the other. This project is also important because the

work has necessarily got to be finished in time. That was why a sort of rapport between the tenderer and the management became very important. I therefore feel that there was nothing wrong in accepting the tender of one firm and in ignoring that of the other.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: There were six tenders.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Well, a choice had to be made between the two lowest tenders. The others were high up.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: They were not. The figures show that they were not.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Yours also was not the lowest. I am very sorry that Mr. Uttam Singh Dugal who is an honourable Member of this House has chosen to project the interest of his firm in this House through his own self and in a way he has taken advantage of his membership of this House which advantage is not available to other tenderers and other contractors. The normal procedure in such matter is that the person concerned does not participate in the debate and there was much in what Mr. Mohan Dharia said on his point of order and when he made an appeal to the hon. Member. But the hon. Member seems to be more a contractor than an hon. Member of this House and he, therefore, ignored the appeal of Mr. Mohan Dharia.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: Madam, I strongly protest against those words which are being used by the hon. Member. I admit that I am more a contractor because I have been sixty years in this profession.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: That is what I have said.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: I am not like Mr. Arjun Arora who runs after Birlas and others.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: I have said only what he has now admitted.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have to conclude now.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: I will take only two more minutes, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have only one more minute.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: In this project there are two parts. The first part consists of the annexe and the addition of a few more rooms and a few more beds. Nobody in this House objects to that.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please wind up now. You have taken more than five minutes.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Well, Madam, others have taken 15 and 20 minutes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Arjun Arora, please conform to the time.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: I am trying to conclude within as short a time as possible.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I shall pass on to the next Member if you go on in this fashion. Please make your point and take your seat soon.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Madam, you seem to have developed some sort of an allergy to me.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No reflection on the Chair. Please conclude now.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Madam, can the hon. Member suggest that you suffer from some disease like allergy?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have already said there should be no reflection on the Chair.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: I did not mean any reflection on the Chair, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHARMAN: Your time is over and you have to take your seat.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Let me complete my speech.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, please conclude now. The trouble with you is that you cannot conclude.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: There are two parts in this project. The first part relates to the addition of some 300 rooms. Nobody in this House or anywhere else has objected to that.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes, yes. We have.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: You have not.

THE DEPUY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Arora your time is up. That will do.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: The other part relates to the revolving tower over which all of us are revolving. I was myself not very convinced about the utility of the revolving tower.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think that will do.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: But from what Mr. Oberoi has said it is obvious that the tower will be a useful thing and not much expenditure is involved in it. Therefore I support the construction of this revolving tower so that we can be revolving in it.

شادی اے - ایم - طارق (چوہدری ایم)

گمشدہ: میڈم تپتی چہرہ میں
مستتر صاحب کو اور اشوکا ہوٹل کو
ان کے اس کارنامہ پر مبارکباد دیتا
ہوں - جہاں تک ہندوستان کا تعلق
ہے ہمیں یہ دیکھنا ہے کہ ہندوستان
کو اور بھی دوسرے مہذب ملکوں کا
مقابلہ کرنا ہے اور دنیا کے مہذب
ملکوں کا مقابلہ کرنا ہے اور دنیا کے
مہذب ملکوں میں ہوٹلوں کی ازحد
ضرورت ہے - ہوٹل بنائے جاتے ہیں
لیکن مجھے انتہائی افسوس ہے اپنے
دوست بھوپیش گپتا پر جو آپ

[شری اے - ایم - طارق]

گو سوشلسٹ کہتے ہیں کمیونسٹ کہتے ہیں اور یہاں پبلک سیکٹر پر پرائیویٹ سیکٹر کے بی ہاف پر حملہ کرتے ہیں -

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I take serious exception to that, Madam, because it will be remembered that as soon as the Ashoka Hotel started and it was given to the Maharaja of Jamnagar we here fought against it and got it transferred to the public sector. I am not for the private sector. I say take away even this Oberoi Hotel, but not in this manner. There are moral questions involved in it.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: You are making use of the public sector to feed the private sector.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please make your points. You have only three minutes more.

شری اے - ایم - طارق : میں یہ

عرض کر رہا تھا کہ اگر ہم دنیا کے ملکوں کو دیکھیں تو یو-ای-آر میں ، ماسکو میں گورنمنٹ خود ہوٹلس کو دن کرتی ہے ، بہتر ہوٹلس کو دن کرتی ہیں - کھرو میں ہی جو ہمارے بعد آزاد ہوا ان کے یہاں ٹاورس ہیں - ٹاورس ہونا کوئی بہت بری بات نہیں ہے - آپ قاہرہ میں جا کر دیکھئے لوگ قطار میں کھڑے ہوتے ہیں - وہ یو ارن فارن ایکسچینج ، اور آپ کے اپنے لوگ وہاں جائیں گے - جو لوگ یہ کہتے ہیں کہ پیسے کا ناجائز استعمال ہوتا ہے وہ خون اس ہاوس میں بیٹھ کر یہ کہتے ہیں -

They come into the House and say things without full knowledge

لیکن اگر ہم ایک مہذب ملک کے ہیں ، اگر ہمیں دنیا کے ملکوں سے مقابلہ کرنا ہے تو اپنے ملک کی شان کو بھی بڑھانا ہے - جو ملک کو دیکھئے - آ جائیں ان کو ایسی سہولتیں ، ایسی ضروریات بہم پہنچانا ہیں جس کے وہ عادی ہیں تاکہ وہاں کے لوگ بھی متاثر ہو جائیں اور ہمارے اوگن کو بھی یہ پارہ مسخر ہو جائے - اور ملکوں میں ہے - توکیو میں ہے ، فرانس میں ہے ، اور جگہ ہے ، تمام دنیا میں ہے -

لیکن دو ہانور کا مجھے انتہائی افسوس ہوا اور مجھے اس بات کا بڑا افسوس ہے کہ کہ کسی سمیٹر نے اس کی طرف توجہ نہیں کی - جہاں تک چیمبرن اشوکا ہوٹل کا تعلق ہے - وہ آئی نو ہم پرسنلی مہتمم ، میں ان کو اس زمانہ سے جانتا ہوں جب کہ وہ فائننس منسٹری میں تھے ، جب کہ اسٹیٹ ٹریڈنگ کارپوریشن میں تھے میں ان کی پورو ذمہ داری لیتا ہوں ان کی دیانت داری کی - مجھے انتہائی افسوس ہے کہ بڑا آسان ہو گیا ہے پرائیویٹ سیکٹر کی طرف سے پبلک سیکٹر کو مختلف طریقوں سے کڈم کرنا - آپ یہ کہیں کہ اشوکا ہوٹل کی ضرورت ہی نہیں ہے پھر یہ کہ ریوالونگ ٹاور نہیں چاہئے اور یہ

کہیں کہ ملسٹروں نے گڑبڑ کی ہے۔ یہ اسسٹروں کی نیت پر شدہ کہیں یہ سب حملہ ہے اور ہمیں دیانت داری سے ان حملوں کا مقابلہ کرنا ہے۔ کونسا کنٹریکٹر ہے اسے ملک میں جو کہ کمیشن نہیں دیتا۔ فرق صرف دو لاکھ کا ہے۔ اگر قورڈل صاحب کو ملتا تو وہ بھی کمیشن دیتے، کمیشن کے بغیر کسی کو ملتا نہیں۔ مسٹر قورڈل نے ایک اور بات کہی کہ صاحب—میں وزیر صاحب کے گھر نہیں گیا۔ آپ وزیر صاحب کے گھر مزاج پرسی کے لئے نہیں گئے تھے ٹھیک ہے مگر ٹیلنڈر کیسے پہنچا آپ کے پاس اور اگر پہنچا تو آپ لارم نے ریٹس کیوں کوٹ دیا۔ آپ پروٹسٹ کے طور پر ٹیلنڈر کو واپس دیئے۔ ٹیلنڈر کو ہی نہ لینے۔ لیکن یہ سب باتیں ہم کو ایک خاص انداز سے دیکھنی ہیں۔ وہ کہتا کہ صاحب مسٹر وتلم ہوں۔ مسٹر وتلم کو میں جانتا ہوں۔ میں ان کا کوئی وکیل نہیں ہوں لیکن میرے لحاظ سے یہ ان پر حملہ ہے۔ یہ سارا ہمارے سوشلزم پر حملہ ہے اور مجھے انتہائی افسوس ہے ان لوگوں پر یہی جو آپ کو سوشلزم سے ایک قدم آگے سمجھتے ہیں۔

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Tariq, the Ashoka Hotels Employees' Union, and the employees are complaining against the person.

SHRI A. M. TARIQ: They may complain but Mr. Tirath Ram...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, Order. No mention of names if it can be helped.

SHRI A. M. TARIQ: I know about Mr. Tirath Ram. As a Kashmiri I can tell you something. I have never seen Mr. Tirath Ram.

مگر تیرتھ رام تھیکسدار کے بارے میں یہ تمام گورنمنٹ کی رائے ہے کہ وقت پر کام کرنا ہے جو پل انہوں نے کشمیر میں بنائے ہیں وقت پر بنائے ہیں، اگر وہ نہیں ہوتے تو شاہد انڈین آر سی گہری دھموں میں نہیں پہنچتی اس کی شکل کیا ہے میں نہیں جانتا ہوں اور یہ سزا دے یہ ہوں دیکھا ہے کہ اس کا کم کون وقت پر کرنا ہے۔ (Time bell rings) اگر کہیں تین لاکھ یا چار لاکھ کا خرچ ہے تو کوئی زیادہ نہیں ہے۔

श्री अजुन शरोडा : आ : का बगई कहती च दिये ।

شری اے۔ ایم۔ طارق : برائی دینے میں ماہر ہوں لیکن اچھائی کہ اچھائی ہی کہونگا۔

श्री भूपेश गुप्त . भाई तारिक, आप तो संश्लिष्ट वाले हैं वहां का इन्डियन यूनियन जो बोलता है उकां सुनिये ।

شری اے۔ ایم۔ طارق : تو اس لحاظ سے جھوٹے ملازمین کو جن کو کم تنخواہ ملنی ہے اسٹرانگ کرنے کا حق ہے لیکن یہ کہنا مہنجر بے ایمان ہے۔ ملسٹر نے غلطی کی ہے غلط بات ہے۔ ایسی بات کہنے سے آپ اسے ملک کے مزدوروں کی تحریک کو نقصان پہنچانا ہے۔ آپ مزدوروں کو غلط راستے پر ڈالتا ہے۔ آپ مزدوروں سے کہتے، ان کی مزدوری بڑھاؤ لیکن یہ نہیں کہتے کہ سارا مہنجمنٹ چور ہے۔

میں ان الفاظ کے سامنے اس لشوک ہوٹل پروجیکٹ کی پر زور حمایت کرتا ہوں اور سزا دے کہتا ہوں دلی میں، بمبئی میں، کلکتہ میں ہر جگہ اس قسم کا ایک ایک پروجیکٹ ہو۔

श्री ए० एन० तारिक (जम्मू एण्ड कश्मीर) मेडम डिप्टी चेयरमैन, मैं मिनिस्टर साहब को और अशोका होटल को उनके इस कारनामे पर मुबारिकबाद देता हूँ जहाँ तक हिन्दुस्तान का ताल्लुक है हमें यह देखना है कि हिन्दुस्तान को और भी दूसरे मुहजब मुल्कों का मुकाबला करना है और दुनिया के मुहजब मुल्को में होटलों की अग्रहद जरूरत है। होटल बनाए जाते हैं लेकिन मुझे इन्तहाई अफसोस है अपने दोस्त भूपेश गुप्ता पर जो अपने आप को सोशलिस्ट कहते हैं कम्युनिस्ट कहते हैं और यहां पब्लिक सेक्टर पर प्राइवेट सेक्टर के बीहाफ पर हमला करते हैं।

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I take serious exception to that. Madam, because it will be remembered that as soon as the Ashoka Hotel started and it was given to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir we here fought against it and got it transferred to the public sector. I am not far the private sector. I say take away even this Oberoi Hotel, but not in this manner. There are moral questions involved in it.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: You are making use of the public sector to feed the private sector.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please make your points. You have only three minutes more

श्री ए० एन० तारिक : मैं यह अर्ज कर रहा था कि अगर हम दुनिया के मुल्कों को देखें तो यू० ए० आर० में, मासको में गवर्नमेंट खुद होटलम को रन करती है, बेहतर से बेहतर होटलम हैं। नैरो में ही जो हमारे बाद आजाद हुआ उनके यहां टावर्स हैं, टावर्स होमा कोई

बहुत बुरी बात नहीं है। आप कहिशा में जा कर देखिए लोग कतार में खड़े होते हैं "यू अरन फारन एक्सचेंज" और आप के अपने लोग वहा जाएंगे। जो लोग यह कहते हैं कि पैसे का नज्दाइज इस्तेमाल होता है वह खुद उम हाउस में बैठ कर यह कहते हैं। They come into the House and say things without full knowledge. लेकिन अगर हम एक मुहजब मुल्क के हैं अगर हमें दुनिया के मुल्कों से मुकाबला करना है तो अपने मुल्क की शान को भी बढ़ाना है। जो मुल्क को देखने आ जाएं उनको ऐसी सहुलियते ऐसी जरूरियात बहम पहुंचाना है जिसके वह आदी है ताकि वहा के लोग भी मतासर हो जाएं और हमारे लोगों को भी यह पावर मुयसर हो जाए और मुल्कों में है, टोबियों में है, फ्रांस में है और जगह है तमाम दुनिया में है।

लेकिन दो बातों का मुझे इन्तहाई अफसोस हुआ और मुझे इस बात का बड़ा अफसोस है कि किसी मेम्बर ने इसकी तरफ तवज्जो नहीं की। जहां तक चेयरमैन, अशोका होटल का ताल्लुक है, "आई नो हिम परस्नेली मेडम" मैं उनको उस जमाने से जानता हूँ जबकि वह फाइनांस मिनिस्ट्री में थे जबकि स्टेट ट्रेडिंग कारपोरेशन में थे मैं उनकी पूरी जिम्मेदारी लेता हूँ उनकी दयानतदारी की। मुझे इन्तहाई अफसोस है कि बड़ा आसान हो गया है प्राइवेट सेक्टर की तरफ से पब्लिक सेक्टर को मुख्तलिफ तरीकों से कंडम करना। आप यह कहें कि अशोका होटल की जरूरत ही नहीं है फिर यह कि स्विटलिंग टावर नहीं चाहिए और फिर यह कहें कि मिनिस्ट्री ने गड़ बड़ की है फिर

अफसरों की नियत पर शुद्ध करें यह सब हमला है और हमें दयानतदारी से इन हमलों का मुकाबला करना है। कौन सा कन्ट्रोलर है इस मुल्क में जो कि कमीशन नहीं देता। फर्क सिर्फ दो लाख का है। और दुगल साहब को मिलता हो वह भी कमीशन देते कमीशन के बगैर किसी को मिलता नहीं। मिस्टर दुगल ने एक और बात कही कि साहब, मैं वजीर साहब के घर नहीं गया। आप वजीर साहब के घर मिजान पुरसी के लिए नहीं गये थे ठीक है मगर टेंडर कैसे पहुंचा आप के पास और अगर पहुंचा तो आपकी फर्म ने रेट्स क्यों कौट किया। आप प्रोटेस्ट के तौर पर टेंडर को वापस कर देते। टेंडर को ही न लेते। लेकिन यह सब बातें हमको एक खास अन्दाज से देखनी हैं। यह कहना कि साहब, मिस्टर रतनम हैं, मिस्टर रतनम को मैं जानता हूँ, मैं उनका कोई वकील नहीं हूँ लेकिन मेरे लिहाज से यह उन पर हमला है। यह सारा हमारे सोशलिज्म पर हमला है और मुझे इन्तहाई अफसोस है उन लोगों पर भी जो अपने आप को सोशलिज्म से एक कदम आगे समझते हैं।

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Tariq, the Ashoka Hotels Employees' Union and the employees are complaining against the person.

SHRI A. M. TARIQ: They may complain but Mr. Tirath Ram.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order Order. No mention of names if it can be helped.

SHRI A. M. TARIQ: I know about Mr. Tirath Ram. As a Kashmiri I can tell you something. I have never seen Mr. Tirath Ram.

मगर तीर्थ राम ठेकेदार के बारे में यह तमाम गवर्नमेंट की राय है कि वह वक्त पर काम करता है जो धुल उन्होंने काश्मीर में बनाए हैं वक्त पर बनाए हैं अगर वह नहीं होते तो शायद इंडियन आर्मी कहीं जम्मू में नहीं

पहुंचती। उसकी शकल क्या है मैं नहीं जानता हूँ और फिर सरकार ने यह भी देखा है कि उसका काम कौन वक्त पर करता है। (Time bell rings) अगर कहीं तीन लाख या चार लाख का खर्च है तो कोई ज्यादा नहीं है।

श्री अजुन आरोड़ा : आपको बुराई कहनी चाहिये।

श्री ए० एम० तारिक : बुराई करने में मैं माहिर हूँ लेकिन अच्छाई को अच्छाई ही कहूंगा।

श्री भूपेश गुप्त : भाई तारिक, आप तो सोशलिज्म वाले हैं। वहाँ का इम्प्लायोज यूनियन जो बोलता है उसको सुनिये।

श्री ए० एम० तारिक : तो इन लिहाज से छोटे मूलाजमीन को जिन को कम तनखाह मिलती है स्ट्राइक करने का हक है लेकिन यह कहना मैनेजर बेईमान है मिनिस्टर ने गलती की है गलत बात है। ऐसी बात कहने में अपने इस मुल्क के मजदूरों की तहरीकों को नुकसान पहुंचाना है। अपने मजदूरों को गलत रास्ते पर डालना है। आप मजदूरों से कहिये उनकी मजदूरी बढ़ाइये लेकिन यह नहीं कहिये कि सारा मैनेजमेंट चोर है।

मैं इन इल्फाज के साथ इस अशोका होटल प्रोजेक्ट की पुरखोर हिमायत करता हूँ और सरकार से कहता हूँ दिल्ली में, बम्बई में, कलकत्ता में, हर जगह इस किसम का एक एक प्रोजेक्ट हो।

श्री टी० पांडे (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मैं बहुत कम समय लूंगा। मैं होटल कारपोरेशन का डाइरेक्टर रह चुका हूँ। अब इस वक्त इन्डियन टूरिज्म होटल कारपोरेशन बना हुआ है। शायद मेम्बर्स को यह ज्ञात नहीं है कि भारत सरकार की यह योजना है कि हिन्दुस्तान के

बड़े बड़े शहरों में आर जा पुरातन स्थान हैं उन सभी जगहों में हॉटल बनाने का योजना है। हमारी मिक्स्ड इकानामी है, प्राइवेट सेक्टर और पब्लिक सेक्टर। यह जो अशोक हॉटल की योजना है, इसका बढ़ाने की है, उसमें एक ग्विनिंग टावर की बात भी है। इस योजना का मैं हृदय से समर्थन करता हूँ। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र में यह काम होना बहुत ही अच्छा है, इसके प्रबन्ध के बारे में मुझे बहुत जानकारी नहीं है। सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग के बारे में मैं अच्छा राय नहीं रखता हूँ। मैं एक बहुत बड़े बुजुर्ग की राय प्रकट करता हूँ। श्री राजगोपालाचारी सन् 1937 में जब मद्रास के मुख्य मंत्री हुए तो उन्होंने तीन दुश्मन अपने बताए और पी० डब्लू० डी० को नम्बर 1 बताया और दो दुश्मनों को मैं छोड़े देता हूँ।

श्री भूपेश गुप्त वह क्या है ?

श्री पी० पांडे पी० डब्लू० डी० नम्बर 1। दो जो है, उनको मैं छोड़ देता हूँ।

डा० एन० एम० एस० सिद्ध नहीं छोड़िये। नहीं।

श्री टी० पांडे उसमें से कुछ यही बंटे हुए हैं। कहने से क्या फायदा ? हल्ला करेंगे, ये बड़ा शोर मचायेंगे। इसलिये मैं यह कहता हूँ कि जिस प्रकार से टेण्डर दिया गया है अब बार में नहीं प्रकाशित किया गया है, सिलेक्टेड लोगों को बुला लिया गया है, यह पद्धति उचित नहीं है, अवांछनीय है और इससे संदेह पैदा होता है। अब रह गया इसकी जांच पड़ताल की जाये। मैं मिनिस्टर की ईमानदारी पर विश्वास करता हूँ। जैसा वे उचित समझें, वैसा करें, लेकिन कान्फेन्स आफ ओपीनियन इस हाऊस की यह है कि जिस प्रकार से, जिस ढंग से, जिस तरीके से, टेण्डर दिया गया है वह अवांछनीय है, अनुचित है और आलोचना से बरी नहीं किया जा सकता है।

इन शब्दों के साथ, इस योजना का मैं हृदय से समर्थन करता हूँ कि और मैं चाहता हूँ

कि भारतवर्ष के बड़े बड़े शहरों में सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रों में हॉटल खोले जायें और जितना अधिक सुप्रबन्ध हो सके, उतना सुप्रबन्ध किया जाये।

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Madam Deputy Chairman, at the outset let me thank the Chair for admitting this motion which has given me an opportunity to dispel some of the doubts, fears and suspicions in the minds of some hon. Members of this House.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Let us see how you do it.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: I must also thank the hon. Members who have taken part in this debate, those who have supported me and those who have not supported. This debate has given me an opportunity to explain in detail the expansion project, the circumstances in which tenders had to be accepted and how the procedure adopted was proper and legitimate and to prove how there was nothing shady about it.

Now in the month of December the Ministry of Tourism advised the management of the Ashoka Hotels Ltd. for expansion. Also the Ministry of Commerce wrote to the management that India is the host country for the UNCTAD Conference to be held in Delhi from the 1st February 1968. The accommodation in posh hotels available in Delhi is, Ashoka Hotels 450 beds, Oberoi Intercontinental 603 beds, Imperial 150, Claridge 203, total 1406. Apart from the other traffic that these hotels might be having and will have, about 2500 delegates from all over the world are expected. So is it or is it not proper that an undertaking which is in this field, the hotel industry, should extent its activities at this time? Accordingly the management wrote to the Government asking for sanction to undertake a project for expansion and permission was granted by the Government towards the end of January 1967. This project had to be completed by November-December so that the rooms with all the amenities become available by middle of January. When

this permission was granted by the Government in January, the Works Ministry, I understand from the records, advised the Ashoka Hotels management not to go in for open tender enquiry, because in the C.P.W.D. where the work is of an urgent nature or of a specialised nature limited tender enquiry could be issued. Therefore the Ministry suggested the issue of tender notices to 24 leading firms in the field of construction.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: That is all right.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: No; I will read out the names also, for the information of hon. Members because it was alleged to be a hush-hush business. The firms are, Shah Construction Company, Bombay; I am talking of the Bombay firms first. Jolly Brothers, Bombay, Hindustan Construction Ltd., Bombay, Gannon Dunkerley, Bombay, Gamon India (Private) Ltd., Bombay; some firms in Calcutta like B. Nag Chaudhury, Calcutta, Patel Engineering Co. . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Not many in Calcutta.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: No good contractor there in Calcutta; you know better. Then Tarapore & Co., Madras and other leading firms in the field of construction in Delhi. They were all given notices but none was interested. Only these six firms of Delhi purchased the tender forms and out of six only five tendered. One tenderer, Das & Co., did not quote itemwise which was required according to the tender and therefore his tender was not at all considered. Only four remained in the field. The lowest was that of Dugal & Co. and the second lowest was that of Tirath Ram Ahuja & Co. I may mention that every contractor had imposed conditions while submitting his tender. When these tenders

6 P.M.

were opened on the 10th April, 1967, they were sent to the consultants—8.

ing architects for examination. Their opinion was sought and on their opinion the Board of Directors of Ashoka Hotels held a meeting on the 20th April, 1967. They decided and accepted the tender of Messrs. Tirath Ram Ahuja and Company for Rs. 89 lakhs odd. The consultants, when they examined the tender . . .

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: What was the quotation of the other two tenders?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: I answered that in reply to a question the other day. Therefore, the hon. Member can refer to that.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: Why not give it now?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: It is not necessary for the purpose. These are the two tenders which are in question. Now, they examined the tenders and they held that the tender of Tirath Ram Ahuja is in order. It is not incomplete. Then, they also said . . .

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: Mr. Dugal's was not in order?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Dugal's was in order, but it was not accepted. I will give the reasons why it was not considered. This is what the architect said:—

"In so far as large architectural projects requiring a very high degree of co-ordination of services, workmanship and finish, such as a luxury hotel, their experience seems to be limited."

Their experience means the experience of Uttam Singh Dugal and Company. It says:—

"Comparing, therefore, the standard of performance, reputation, smooth dealings and experience, particularly in the architectural building works, and taking into account the nature and complexity of Ashoka Hotels Annexe Project, we recommended that Messrs. Tirath Ram Ahuja and Company may be entrusted with the work."

[Shri Jagannath Rao]

So, it is in order. Ashoka Hotels Limited is an autonomous corporation. They have got a Board of Directors. They rightly accepted the tender. They did accept it, the second lowest tender. But when it came to me, I am the Minister answerable to Parliament. What should I do? Mr. Jagat Narain said that I ran to the Finance Minister. I am also answerable to Parliament. I have to satisfy myself about the *bona fides* of the transaction. When I looked into the matter I felt that the Board of Directors of Ashoka Hotels had the right to accept the tender. I did not question that. But then regarding the amount for which it was accepted I felt, well, I should consult the Finance Minister. I went to him and he also agreed with me, well, let us not interfere with the decision of the Board of Directors regarding the selection of the contractor. But he said they should be asked to reduce the amount by Rs. 2,20,000.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why did not the Board make that suggestion? I am not questioning and I am not opposing what you did. If you had brought it down, it is good, but how is it that the Board did not do so? The Board should have done it itself.

(Interruptions).

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: The Board did not do it . . .

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Uttar Pradesh): The provision is to refer the matter to the Minister. What the Board did not do the Minister did. Why should he object to it?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The Board should have recommended it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. order.

SHRI R. S. KHANDEKAR: How did you arrive at that figure?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: I will tell you. Please have patience. Please allow me to speak.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, you have put your questions. Listen to him.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Madam Deputy Chairman, the second lowest tender of Tirath Ram Ahuja was accepted by the Board of Directors and then the file came to me for my approval, because the Government has the controlling interest and I, as the Minister-in-charge of the Department and the Hotels which are attached to the Department, am answerable to Parliament. Therefore, I thought it my duty and necessary duty to consult the Finance Minister because I was not in this Ministry when the earlier portion of the project was considered by the Government. There is continuity of Government, of course. When it was done, I thought I should go to the Finance Minister. I took his advice. He also agreed with me that we should not interfere with the discretion, the decision of the Board of Directors, because they are an autonomous body. But then in the matter of money, we both thought that he should be asked to reduce it by Rs. 2,20,000 and he did it. Therefore, there is no question of any negotiation.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: They want to know how you arrived at that figure.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why did you do it? The Board should have done it.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: The Board accepted it. I said the difference between the figures of Messrs. Uttam Singh Dugal and Company and Messrs. Tirath Ram Ahuja and Company was Rs. 2,12,000 odd. So, I said it should be at least Rs. 2,20,000. We arrived at that figure and asked them to reduce it. I would go to the extent of saying that even the acceptance of the second lowest tender was within the rights of the Board of Directors. I need not have interfered

with their decision, but I felt, well in the circumstances let us try to reduce the amount by a large sum and that was done. That is how I came into the picture. There is nothing shady about it. Mr. Jagat Narain said that I was running about and I got myself involved. There is no involvement in this case. I felt it my duty. I could have myself said: You reduce it by Rs. 2 lakhs, but I thought a senior Minister, the Finance Minister, should be consulted, because I came to this Ministry and I was new then. Therefore, Madam, there is nothing wrong in this. Then, why is it that Messrs. Uttam Singh Dugal and Company were not considered? I still say, I repeat it and I will go on repeating it that his past performance of the contracts with the Government was not satisfactory. I have got reports with me and if the House wants, I am prepared to read them. He took up a contract in the Trisuli project. His performance was very bad. He has done only 25 per cent of the work which has been entrusted to him and the work is still incomplete and he has preferred some claims. The matter is before arbitration.

SHRI UTTAM SINGH DUGAL: Madam, this charge is completely untrue.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Even if he was the lowest tenderer, I would not prefer him for a contract of this type. I wanted the contract to be completed in ten months' time. Even I would have defended Ashoka Hotel management if they had stuck to the tender of Rs. 89 lakhs odd quoted by Tirath Ram Ahuja. But I thought it to be my duty to try and reduce it. Therefore, I need not say more. If the House wants it, I can say more . . .

(Interruptions)

Nobody can say anything against me. The hon. Member, Mr. Uttam Singh Dugal, wanted an interview with me. He is a colleague of mine.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why did you see him? No. You should not meet him. Did you ask him as to what was the business?

(Interruptions)

Madam Deputy Chairman, he is a Member of this House. If the hon. Minister knew that he was coming to see him, he should not have granted that interview.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Madam, I did not know that he was coming to me with this purpose. He is a Member of Parliament and a colleague of ours. I saw him and then he made some personal remarks against my predecessor, Mr. Khanna. He said Mr. Khanna did not like him. He did not give him any contract or the Chief Engineer did not like him and so on. Then, I told him that I did not know and I was new to the Ministry. He used the word 'insult' and said that he had been insulted all along . . .

SHRI TRILOKI SINGH: May I ask a question? According to the hon. Minister, Mr. Dugal's contract performance was not satisfactory. According to his statement also among the list of 24 firms, to whom the tender was issued, Dugal was one of them and this list had been issued with the approval of the Works Ministry. May I know if Dugal's performance was not satisfactory, why was a tender issued to this firm?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Dugal's name did not figure in the list of 24 contractors. The CPWD Office did not give his name. It was I who did it. Now I realise that I did a mistake. He saw me. I did not know what for, for what purpose he wanted to see me. I said, he is a Member of Parliament and a colleague of mine and it is my duty to see him. I saw him in the Ministry. I have still got his visiting card and gave the time as 4 P.M. It is not a personal dealing. He saw me and he explained to me . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Never believe these contractors.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: I am not going to see a contractor a second time.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Take a vow in Kali Bari that you will never meet a contractor.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: We will both of us go there.

(Interruptions)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister speak.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Madam, these are the circumstances. There is nothing shady about it. It is unfortunate that Mr. Ratnam's name has been brought in. The Ashoka Hotel was constructed in 1955-56 when Mr. Ratnam was not the Chairman of Ashoka Hotels. Perhaps he was a Director. I understand he constructed a house somewhere in Delhi, in 1960-61. He got land from the Government and he constructed it. Where was the connection between the construction of the house and the 1967 contract?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The connection is this. He has been associated with him. It is all suspicion.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: This has become a fashion in Parliament now-a-days. Mudslinging has become the fashion and allegations are made, unfounded allegations. Unfortunately persons who are not present in the House, who cannot defend themselves

are the targets. Therefore, there is nothing shady in this. The project was a necessity.

Then some Members said that an enquiry was necessary. There is accountability for public undertakings to Parliament. What does accountability mean? The Public Accounts Committee of Parliament goes into these things. If the Public Accounts Committee feels that there is something bad and fishy, then there is need for appointment of a Committee.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What about the employees' union?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: That does not arise in this connection. Therefore, Madam, I am not going to say anything more, it is not necessary for me. All aspects of the case have been explained. Once again I repeat that there is nothing fishy about it, nothing shady about it. It had to be pushed through. It had to be completed in ten months. Therefore, we have done it. I once again thank the House for giving me this opportunity to explain the matter.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at eleven minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Friday, the 16th June, 1967.