

15.03 hrs.

[English]

BROADCASTING BILL*

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishment of an independent authority to be known as the Broadcasting Authority of India, for the purposes of facilitating and regulating broadcasting services in India and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

MR. SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishment of an independent authority to be known as the Broadcasting Authority of India, for the purpose of facilitating and regulating broadcasting services in India and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

Shri Rupchand Pal. He has an objection. Please be pointed.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Sir, I am very much concerned about the time constraint. I shall not only be brief but also very very relevant.

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know about it.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Always in the past, interdependent Bills had been passed together. I am not going into the contents of the Broadcasting Bill. But the Prasar Bharati Bill was passed in 1990. This Government, in its Common Minimum Programme, had committed that it would implement the Bill without further delay. One year had already passed. I am referring to one debate in the other House when you were the Minister. The hon. Prime Minister at that time said . . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : He was not the Prime Minister at that time.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Yes, he was not the Prime Minister at that time. But the present Prime Minister, at that time as a Member of the House, said one thing. I just quote one line. He said : "We will meet the challenge when it comes back." The challenge, that is the Prasar Bharati Bill, which has been lying for all these months

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without being implemented, is proposed to be diluted. So, without even going into the contents of it, I have got very serious objection to the introduction on three grounds.

In spite of the repeated assurances given in the last seven years, it has not been implemented. In spite of the directives of the Calcutta High Court, this Government had appealed for extension of the period. Sir, you were there at that time. The provisions of the Act are being diluted in the proposed Bill.

Thirdly, the Act has been kept in hibernation. It has not been implemented and even without implementation of this Act, it is not only being diluted but it is also being given a decent burial. So, I object to the very introduction of this Bill.

MR. SPEAKER : With my utmost due respect, I do not think that at this stage, anything can be done. The only question that you can raise is whether the Parliament is constitutionally competent or not. I do not think there is any need for the Minister to reply.

The question is :

"The leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishment of an independent authority to be known as the Broadcasting Authority of India, for the purposes of facilitating and regulating broadcasting services in India and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I introduce* the Bill

15.07 hrs.

*[English]*MOTION RE: REFERENCE OF BROADCASTING
BILL TO JOINT COMMITTEE

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, do you have any other Motion to move ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : In view of the fact that this is a very sensitive and complex piece of legislation being enacted in an original area, I propose that the Bill be referred to a Joint Committee. I will read out my Motion.

* Introduced with the recommendation of the President.