

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : But that circular must be withdrawn first...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK (Aska) : I request the hon. Minister that the circular should be withdrawn. The former Speaker, Shri Shivraj Patil had projected the entire idea and the scheme was prepared by him, under his aegis. The scheme should be implemented...*(Interruptions)* The House should go into it and then the new circular should come...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ABDUL REHMAN ANTULAY : Sir, a High-Powered Committee was constituted by the then hon. Speaker, Shri Shivraj Patil, in consultation with the Government, in which all the top leaders of all the parties were the Members.

The Committee gave an Interim Report wherein, as hon. Shivraj ji just now mentioned, Rs. 2 crore was recommended. The Government instead agreed for Rs. 1 crore. Inflation has its cruel hand every sphere of life. Therefore, I would say that the amount should be increased to the 2 crores. All the Members of the Committee applied their mind and gave a unanimous Report. These recommendations were made with a view to make the MPs better functional and more effective. This is not meant as some sort of perks or privileges of the members or any such additional facility. What the committee has recommended was for the purpose of making the Members more effective and functional so that they can discharge duties in a better way and at the same time remain in touch with constituency by doing service as MP's. Various recommendations were made keeping all these things in view. Had that Interim Report been accepted at that time, we would have surely, thereafter final Report. Unfortunately, the Interim Report has not been accepted fully, as even though it recommended Rs. 2 crore but only Rs. 1 crore was given and that is the end of it. No other recommendation was accepted. Even so, a lot of criticism was made. I think this all informed criticism should not have been made. Criticism was mainly made if it was for special perks for Members of committee including me. But no benefit has been given to any Member so far. I am for his Constituency aggrieved. I had almost told the then Speaker in anguish. "I was tired. The Government is not doing anything. I am very sorry about it and, the best and honourable course for me was to quit." It is high time that this Government accepts the recommendations of the committee *in-toto*. The committee comprised of all the top leaders as I said. Mr. Justice Lodha was also there. No Party was left out. Shri Somnath Chatterjee was also there. Shri Indrajit Gupta was also as Member. All the Parties were represented in that Committee and it gave a unanimous report. What more is required taking the advantage of today's opportunity when I am asked by many Hon. members to interfare. I would urge upon the Government to accept the recommendations, *in toto*, made in the interim Report. Till the Interim Report is not accepted, the question of final Report does not arise.

*[Transation]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Just wait for a moment. Shri Antulay please do not tender your resignation from the Committee. There is no reason to get angry. You should continue in the Committee. Second point is that this matter would be sorted out in a meeting in consultation with Mr. Speaker, Leaders of various parties, Minister of Planning and others as has been mentioned by the Parliamentary Affairs Minister.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Mr. Shivraj Patil would also be there. They will sort out the matter.

*[English]*

SHRI ABDUL REHMAN ANTULAY : No, further avoidable and unnecessary delay occur in this matter. Further discussion means, I may humbly suggest further delay... The Interim Report be please accepted.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It will be done as early as possible. It is better if we can have a discussion during this week itself.

SHRI ABDUL REHMAN ANTULAY : Sir, my information is, that the hon. Speaker and the hon. Deputy Speaker are going to accept it. I had discussed it with the hon. Speaker and he said that this would be done as per the rules. Modalities will be worked out to do whatever is permissible within the rules. Whatever needs to be brought through legislation before Parliament, I mean in the form of a legislation, this should be done, all this should be over within the next two weeks.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government, and of the House, to a very important matter...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please wait for a minute. You have been pressing for a long time. Have you given something in writing. Your name is not there in the list. I am sorry. When you give a notice I will consider it.

*[English]*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : The important matter that I would like to raise - and draw the attention of the Government - is that it is the duty of the Government, especially of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. To maintain harmony between the Engineering and the programme staff of the Doordarshan and the All India Radio. Otherwise, programmes cannot be conducted properly and the messages cannot be conveyed to the people through this important media. Unfortunately, the Programme Staff Association is compelled to go on an indefinite strike from today onwards. They are sitting on 'dharna'

in front of the Doordarshan and Akashvani Bhavan. The staff will be on strike for an indefinite period, all over India.

AN HON. MEMBER : Let them strike.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Please listen to me. There is no question of saying, 'Let them strike'. Let us try to understand the problem. Even the TV operators that are there cannot perform and no programme can be conducted without either the engineering or the programme staff.

Responding to a court decision, the hon. Minister raised the pay scale of engineering staff from Rs.1400 to Rs.2000, and ignored the claim of the programming staff who has been at par with the engineering staff. The Government referred the matter to the Fifth pay Commission on the plea that they will look into it. Very recently the Fifth Pay Commission have categorically communicated to the Government that they would not look into the past anomalies as they do not fall in their terms of reference. Now where would the Programming staff go? They are as competent as the engineering staff. They are also involved in the job of sound-recording. There is total demoralisation in the programming staff through out the country since yesterday. The quality of programming will deteriorate now. the hon. Minister is not listening to them. If he does not intervene in the matter and decide quickly to restore the anomalies, the entire administration of doordarshan and All India Radio will go to dogs. It will have serious repercussions on the Government.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, through you I appeal to the Government to see that the programming staff do not resort to going on a strike for indefinite period. I appeal to the Government to intervene into this immediately.

We all welcome the rise in the pay scale of the engineering staff. They are also equally required by Doordarsahan. They do a quiet and competent job in the studios of Doordarshan and the All India Radio, but the programming staff is also equilly important. They should not be given step motherly treatment. They should be taken into confidence and their anomalies should be sorted out immediately. Otherwise, the demoralisation in the programming staff will cost the Government dearly. If this is allowed to continue, a situation might develop in which we will find the TV on without any programme to watch.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this is a serious question. The programming staff of AIR and Doordarshan are deprived of the benefit given to others. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the administrative Ministry, did not care to look into the issue. The matter should immediately be referred to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Finance should agree to it. If it is not done, these people will be severly adversely affected, as the Fifth Pay

Commission report is going to be presented very soon. It is the duty of the Government, and particularly the Ministry of Finance, to respond favourably to the demands of these people.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir I fully aware that programme artists are the soul of the programmes telecast by All India Radio and Doordarshan. If they go on strike no programmes can be telecast from A.I.R. and Doordarshan. But step-motherly treatment has been meted out to them. They have not been given the pay-scale entitled. Therefore, they have decided to go on strike on all the stations throughout the country. If the electronic media of our country becomes standstill it would send wrong signals to the world. It is regrettable that the Information and Broadcasting Minister is not prepared to listen to their grievances. He is neither prepared to meet their representatives nor is prepared to raise their pay-scales. Sir through you, I urge upon the Govt. that they should invite their representatives and look into their grievances. Their genuine demands should be accepted so that they may not resort to strike.

[English]

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I join voice with my colleagues who have spoken on the subject. Being in the Consultative's Committee on Information and Broadcasting for a long time, we know about the situation. It is really a blatant injustice that has been done to the programming staff. If immediate intervention is not made, our doordarshan will not be watched by anybody. Only foreign television channels will be watched and not ours.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I also support the point raised by hon. Shri Dasmunshi.

A peculiar situation has arisen in the affairs of Doordarshan. It is good of the Government that they have raised the salaries of engineering staff but at the same time they should not have ignored the legitimate claims of Programme staff, news staff, etc. Now, an imbalance has been created which should be corrected immediately. Otherwise as stated earlier by the hon. Members, an unpleasant situation may arise. In addition to this, I would urge upon the Government to appreciate my another point. Hundreds of LPTs have been set up but they are not functioning. They should be made functional by deploying adequate staff. There is a lot of discontentment among the people in various areas. There is some lack of coordination between the administrative Ministry viz., Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry of Finance. I request the Government to sort out this problem by taking necessary steps to fill up the vacancies in all the LPTs and make them functional.