

And yesterday I appealed and I again appeal to all the Members of the opposition as well as ruling party that they should all come together and sort out the differences and let us not make a mountain of a mole hill. That is it.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA (Jaipur): A situation has been created wherein your intervention is required.

MR. SPEAKER: I always try. My services are always at your disposal. You are my masters. I am at your feet. No problem.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA: You are the custodiam of our rights..

MR. SPEAKER: That is why, whatever way I can do, I try to do. I am at your disposal.

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT (Arrah): Why don't you call a meeting of both sides and settle the issue?

MR. SPEAKER: We have been trying to do it. We shall try again.

12.07 hrs.

RULING RE: QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE AGAINST CHIEF EDITOR EXECUTIVE EDITOR, PRINTER PUBLISHER AND CITY CORRESPONDENT OF NAV BHARAT TIMES

[English]

SHRI CHIRANJI LAL SHARMA (Karnal): I gave a notice a few days back about privilege. I have forty years standing as an advocate in the profession. I am in active politics for more than forty years. I never drink. I have not touched wine. I have not tasted it. I do not smoke. I have led parliament delegation to eight European countries. Nobody can raise a finger against me regarding my honesty, integrity or character. But the 'Navbharat Times' of 13th January, 1989 has defamed and humiliated

me. I stand humbled down in the eyes of public. This is much too much. I have been very much humiliated. Therefore, Sir,... (Interruptions)

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): This is a very serious matter. (Interruptions)

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA (Jaipur): If Members of Parliament are treated in this manner, where shall we go? If allegations are made without any proof... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now listen to me.

SHRI CHIRANJI LAL SHARMA: It is the height of irresponsibility on the part of 'Navharat Times' to do this. They could have given me a ring and confirmed it from me... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Listen to me also.

(Interruptions)

SHRI CHIRANJI LAL SHARMA: Now I cannot move out of my house. Now the police people and the people at large laugh at me. I was proud of my character. Now I cannot move.

MR. SPEAKER: I took it as seriously as you take it. I think, it must have hurt and hurt badly. It is a question of peoples prestige. If false rumour goes around-, it is very easy to spread it but it is not very easy to wash it. Anyhow, I took it seriously. I wrote to the person concerned, the Editor and I have got a reply to that. I shall give my ruling on that.

On 23rd February, 1989, Shri Chiranjilal Sharma gave notice of a question of privilege against Shri Rajendra Mathur, Chief Editor, Shri Surendra Pratap Singh, Executive Editor, Shri Ramesh Chandra, Printer and Publisher and Shri Ramesh Gaur, City Correspondent of *Navbharat Times* for allegedly publishing a false news item about him under the caption '*Sharaab peekar gadi chala raha Sansad girافتar, riha*'

[Mr. Speaker]

on the front page of its issue dated 13th January, 1989

Shri Chiranji Lal Sharma stated *inter alia* in his notice as follows

"A news item with the caption 'Sharaab Peekar Gadi Chala Raha Sansad Girafatar, Riha' appeared on the first page of the Nav Bharat Times on 13.1.89, specifically mentioning therein that Chiranji Lal Sharma of Sonapat (Haryana) and one of his companion advocate were arrested by Dhaula Kuan Police while Shri Chiranji Lal Sharma was driving the Maruti Van in a drunken state. It is stated that they were arrested under section 107/151 Cr PC and were subsequently released on bail. The van which Shri Chiranji Lal Sharma was driving was also impounded"

Shri Chiranji Lal has further stated that "the news is absolutely baseless, false and frivolous and malicious. As a matter of fact, I myself never in my life touched or tasted any wine. I am keeping the car for the last 25 years, but I have never touched even the steering of the vehicle in my life. I am a teetotaler. He has also stated that the news item has not only disturbed him mentally but has also adversely affected him physically. According to Shri Chiranji Lal Sharma, he personally called on the Chief Editor on 16th January, 1989 and asked him to tender unqualified apology and regrets for the mischief they had committed by publishing the impugned news item. He had also sent a registered A/D letter on 19th January, 1989, to the newspaper in this connection, but the Chief Editor, Executive Editor, Printer and Publisher and the City Correspondent of *Navbharat Times* did not express their regrets till 23rd February, 1989. Shri Sharma has alleged that with the publication of the said news item, his "dignity and prestige has been lowered down in public esteem"

On 24th February, 1989, when Shri Chiranji Lal Sharma sought to raise the matter

in the House as a question of privilege, I observed: "I will take care of it and then I shall let you know"

On the same day, the matter was taken up with the Chief Editor, Executive Editor, Printer and Publisher and the City Correspondent of *Navbharat Times*, New Delhi and they were asked to state within three days of receipt of our communication what they had to say in the matter for my consideration.

On 27th February, 1989, I received their replies which are identical and read as follows -

"At the very outset, we tender our unconditional apology for the mistake in publication of the news item on 13.1.1989 in our newspaper *Navbharat Times* under the caption 'SHARAAB PEE KAR GADI CHALA RAHA SANSAD GIRAFATAR, RIHA'. It is stated that the news item was published in good faith, without any malice and without any intention of causing any sort of defamation or otherwise harm to anyone.

It is stated that the impugned news item was published on 13th ultimo. This inadvertent mistake had occurred due to the similarity in the names of Hon'ble Member of Parliament and the offender. Immediately on realising the mistake, we had issued the clarification and contradiction in the 14th January issue of *Navbharat Times* under the caption 'NAMO KA CHAKKRA'. Copy of the said news item published on 15th January is enclosed herewith *vide* which we had clarified the person apprehended was not Shri Chiranji Lal Sharma, Member of Parliament. We had also complied with the notice dated 16.1.1989 of Shri Chiranji Lal Sharma, Member of Parliament by publishing the apology and clarification on the front page of 8.2.1989 issue of our newspaper. Copy thereof is enclosed for perusal and consideration.

We may again reiterate that we never had any intention of lowering the dignity or prestige of Shri Chiranji Lal Sharma and try our best to keep the high standard of journalism".

Since the *Navbharat Times* has already made adequate amends for the inadvertent lapse on its part, I am treating the matter as closed. I, however, fully share the agony of the Hon'ble Member. I would, therefore, like to emphasise that the newspapers should be extremely careful while publishing news reports about the members. It would be better if they confirm the authenticity of the report before rushing to publish such items in the newspapers and that too prominently on the front page as in the instant case.

12.13 1/2 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE—*Contd.*

[*English*]

Sugar (Price Determination for 1988-89 Production) order, 1988 and Bureau of Indian Standards Rules (First Amendment) 1988.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy of the Sugar (Price Determination for 1988-89 Production) Order, 1988 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G. S. R. 1194(E) in Gazette of India dated the 21st December, 1988 under sub-section (b) of section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

[Placed in Library. See No LT-7404/89]

- (2) A copy of the Bureau of Indian Standards Rules (First Amendment), 1988 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G. S. R. 7(E) in Gazette of India dated the 6th January, 1989,

under section 39 of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986.

[Placed in Library, See No LT-7405/89]

Notification under Payment of Wages Act 1936, Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 and Cine Workers Welfare Fund Act 1981.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RADHA KISHAN MALAVIYA): I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (6) of section 26 of the Payment of Wages Act, 1936:-

- (i) The Payment of Wages (Railways) Amendment Rules, 1988 published in Notification No. G. S. R. 1159(E) in Gazette of India dated the 9th December, 1986.

- (ii) The Payment of Undisbursed Wages (Air Transport Services) Rules, 1988 published in Notification No. G. S. R. 1208(E) in Gazette of India dated the 23rd December, 1988

- (iii) The Payment of Undisbursed Wages (Mines) Rules, 1988 published in Notification No. G. S. R. 34(E) in Gazette of India dated the 18th January, 1989.

[Placed in Library, See No LT-7406/89]

- (2) A copy of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Central (Amendment) Rules, 1988 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G. S. R. 1215(E) in Gazette of India dated the 28th December, 1988, under sub-section (3) of section 35 of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970.

[Placed in Library, See No LT-7407/89]