

[Shri Krishna Chandra Halder]

Government try to evade this discussion on starvation deaths?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no question of evasion.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta-North-East): Is there no propriety involved in this? I recall that this very question caused a storm in the House and the Government finally agreed to this discussion when the Speaker himself insisted that there should be a discussion. Now why by the back door this discussion is allowed to lapse? Is it not something against the grain of parliamentary democracy?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no question of back door or front door. The hon. Member who gave notice of this, in whose name this discussion stands, has written that he is held up in Patna and he could not reach Delhi in time. Therefore, he has requested that this question may not be taken up today. There is no question of front door or back door. So far as lapse of the discussion is concerned, the rules will take care of this.

15.37 Hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

THIRTIETH REPORT

SHRI AMAR NATH CHAWLA (Delhi Sadar): I beg to move:

"That this House do agree with the Thirtieth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 16th August, 1973."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Thirtieth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 16th August, 1973."

The motion was adopted.

15.38 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: OWNERSHIP OF NEWSPAPERS AND NEWS AGENCIES—Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House will now take up further consideration of the Resolution moved by Shri H. N. Mukherjee. Shri Somnath Chatterjee will continue his speech.

श्री मधु लिखरे (बाका) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आज बिना सूचना दिए प्राप्ते बंटे की बहस को टाल दिया गया है। अगर प्राप्ते बंटे की बहस होती तो तीन बजे कार्यवाही शुरू हो जाती और मेरा जो मसौदा है अगले प्रस्ताव पर उसे पेश करने का मौका मिलना। मेरा टिकट रिजर्व हो चुका है, मुझे बम्बई जाना है। अब मैं क्या करूँ प्राप्ते बंटे आपने काट दिया, इसमें मेरा दोष नहीं है। आपने कार्य-पूची में कहा था कि तीन बजे पाइवेट मेम्बरों विजनेस होगा, 6 बजे का प्लेन था, मैं अपना मसौदा पेश करके चला जाता लेकिन अब दिक्कत हो गई है। आप मुझे इजाजत दीजिए। इन तरह कार्य-पूची में जब आप नब्बेदिलिया करके तो मेम्बरों के साथ अत्याय नहीं होना चाहिए। मैं लिखकर देता हूँ, मैं अपना मसौदा अगले प्रस्ताव पर मूक कर रहा हूँ, आप मुझे इजाजत दीजिए और बहस जो चलानी है वह चलायें।

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no question of injustice to anybody. (Interruptions). You have made your point kindly listen to me. (Interruptions). Order please. Why don't you listen to me? There is no question of injustice to anybody. There are certain exigencies of the debate, certain exigencies of the proceedings of the House and certain unforeseen things happen. I will do everything according to the rules. I cannot break them. Now, I had announced this fairly early that this had happened and, therefore, we shall take up the Private Members' Business at 3.30. Please don't raise this thing now.

Shri Somnath Chatterjee to continue his speech.

श्री श्री. पी. जी. (हायुड) : उपाध्यक्ष जी, हम को प्राय डांट कर बात करते हैं और माननीय मन्त्रिमन्त्रिये जी से प्यार से बात करते हैं।

श्री मन्त्रिमन्त्रिये : प्राय हमको ए.पी.ओ. डेट कीजिए।

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot break the rules.

श्री मन्त्रिमन्त्रिये : मेरा महा ही दूसरा है। प्राय मन्त्रिमन्त्रिये सूची में क्या लिखा हुआ था? प्राय बदलने रहने हैं उस से हम को दिक्कत हो जाती है।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That has been varied. The rules allow for certain variations having regard to the exigencies of the proceedings. Shri Somnath Chatterjee.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR (Ahmedabad): Why don't you accommodate him?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: It cannot be done unless the item is taken up. Why are you trying to force the Chair to violate the rules?

Shri Somnath Chatterjee

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Burdwan): Mr Deputy-Speaker, Sir, while supporting the Resolution it is necessary to consider the content of the freedom of speech because it is on the basis of the freedom of speech that attempts or the proposals for diffusion of ownership are opposed by certain newspaper, I feel, the press should be treated as a public utility concern. The adequate service of news is a matter of great public responsibility.

The constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech should include the objective and fearless dissemination of news. We want a free press. By "free press", We mean a press which should be free from the stronghold of the

monopoly houses and the vested interests and it should be responsive to the people's urges and aspirations, and it will educate the people without bias and distortions. The freedom of press should not be equated with the freedom of the Press Barons. The freedom of press can have relevance if it is used for the benefit of the people and not against the people.

In this country, what we find, unfortunately, is that freedom of press is equated with the freedom of the press overlords and not of the working journalists. In our country, we find that 49 newspapers today account for over half of the total circulation. The common ownership dailies command 73.8 per cent of the total circulation. There is a chain of newspapers and different publications under the common ownership. We have seen how the larger newspapers are strangling the smaller ones in the matter of advertisement and also official patronage.

We feel and, no doubt, realise that the newspapers should be run on the basis of profit. But the mass circulation papers are being run not on the basis of proper journalistic methods but as industries controlled by monopoly houses. We find with dismay and anguish that the main objective of monopoly houses who are controlling the newspapers is to make as much money as possible and also to control the essential features of journalism, like editorial policy.

The editorial policy, as we have seen, is being controlled by industrialists and big businessmen magnates on which serious comments have been made by the Press Commission itself. I have before me here a photostat copy of the direction issued by the then Editor of the *Statesman*. Of course, it is of 1968. It is a teleprinter message with regard to the strike by the all-India Newspapers' Employees Federation. When it was placed before the Editor of the *Statesman* Mr. Rangachari, his comment

[Shri Somnath Chatterjee]

was, "Please ignore it." And this important news never came to be published in the *Statesman*. This is how important news-items are being suppressed by these big newspapers.

So far as the disproportionate user of the newsprint between the reading material and the advertisements, we find these days that so far as big newspapers are concerned, they are more concerned with the advertisements than with disseminating proper news materials and especially in these days of newsprint shortage we find that more and more advertisements are coming out. Even the proceedings of the Parliament are not being given proper importance and publicity. There are grave charges of mismanagement against several of the leading newspapers in this country. *The Times of India* has now got Government Directors on its Board and there are serious allegations of mismanagement and misuse of newsprint.

15.46 hrs.

[SHRI S. A. KADER in the Chair].

Inflated figures of circulation are given for the purpose of getting greater allocation of newsprint. I have with me a complaint made by the Electrical Engineer of the *Statesman* where he says that there is a practice in the *Statesman* of printing about 50 per cent of their total copies for selling to the waste-paper dealer on the consumer printing days and thus be able to show an inflated circulation. Unhappily this is not the charge only against the *Statesman* but most of the newspapers are generally known to be indulging in wrongful uses of the newsprint by giving inflated figures of circulation for the obvious object of getting more newsprint quota.

So far as the working journalists are concerned, their fate is such that hardly they have any independence. Their service conditions are miserable. They are being under-paid. They have no voice in the management or

in the editorial policy or even in the distribution of the news-items. The Wage Board recommendations that have been made have not been enforced in all the newspapers. The working journalists wanted bilateral negotiations with the newspapers but here the Government, I am sorry to say, has not given the lead. There was a committee formed and I believe it is still in existence—the Newspaper Finance Committee which was to go into the financial structure, I believe, of several newspapers but you will be surprised to hear that many of the newspapers have not responded to the questionnaire and the information that has been asked for by them. *The Statesman*, I understand, has not even replied along with other papers.

Very recently an incident took place which shows what the fate of working journalists is. In connection with an industrial dispute between *The Statesman* and one of its employees, one of the well-known reporters of *The Statesman*, Mr. B. D. Mathur, was man-handled in the court room or just out side the court room where the industrial tribunal case was being heard, by the Manager of the Delhi office of *The Statesman* and this is the position of the working journalists—a reporter of a paper like *The Statesman* can be man-handled inside a court room by the Manager of a newspaper.

About the news agencies, UNI and the PTI, we know they are also being controlled by the big monopoly houses. We have been asking for converting them into public corporations but that has not been heeded to. That shows who is really controlling these. Recently, the news editor of UNI who was stationed in Delhi was summarily transferred to Bombay and when he protested, he was dismissed. Thereafter when there was agitation, he was reinstated but he was transferred to Srinagar. This is the position of these journalists. The Press being a public utility concerned with public interest we realise and we do want that being in the private hands, it cannot be left completely free for

all kinds of regulations and we feel that by diffusion and delinking of these newspapers some of the ills may be avoided and sooner this attempt is made the better.

But we have to consider how these monopoly houses have come to control these newspapers. These monopoly houses in this country under the economic policy that has been followed in this country under the aegis and patronage and sometimes encouragement of the Government have become bigger and bigger and have assumed elephantine proportion.

The result is this. Government is taking of diffusion and delinking but on the other hand its policy is only encouraging the monopoly houses and making them more and more strong in this country. The result is a complete biased news and distortion of news. Truth has become the greatest casualty in journalism and the free Press is showing its subservience to the ruling party and attachment for the establishment. As it is in the case of foodstuffs where there is adulteration today, so, is the case here where there is adulteration of news also. In most of the Press there is no coverage of the news items about the democratic movements that are taking place about the people's struggles that are going on, etc. During the United Front's regime in West Bengal there was a systematic and calculated campaign of falsehood and calumny deliberately indulged in some of the newspapers. I will read from the publication on the Functioning of the Indian Press. It says:

"When it comes to reporting events in States ruled by leftists some regional dealings betray a furious animosity against the State Governments. This could be seen from the trend of reporting in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* or the Calcutta Edition of the *Statesman* of the law and order situation.

I wish to add, alleged law and order situation.

"...during the United Front regime. Here again the political

antagonism of industrial owners comes into play. The industrial character of the ownership of the *Statesman* is clear. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is owned by a congress family, the members of the family have industrial connections in West Bengal. One of the directors of the paper was the President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta and connected with several industrial concerns as a director."

Though this Government are talking about diffusion and delinking they are really not serious about it at all. Their own partymen are controlling some of the bigger newspapers in the country. They indulge in distorting news, they are indulging in giving out biased news to the Press. They have no faith in the honest and truthful dissemination of news in an objective manner. The ruling party started talking of diffusion and delinking when there was some criticism of their supreme leader, but nobody sheds any tear when the news of the common man's difficulties, their privations and of their acute distress are not reflected in the newspapers in this country.

I would like to be corrected, but my information is that a paper like *National Herald* which was founded by Jawaharlal Nehru finds itself today in a situation where its management is handed over to a brewery magnate. If this is the attitude of the ruling party, how can they speak about delinking and diffusion of newspapers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): What is the name you mentioned?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Brewery magnate, Narang. I would like to be corrected if it is wrong.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: I would correct you straightway. It is not correct.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE:

We want all media of mass communications to be delinked not only from monopoly houses and business houses but also from executive control and ruling party's stranglehold and hegemony.

Sir, we do not want a corrupt press like the corrupt All India Radio. As we do not want 'All Indira Radio', we do not also want an All Indira Press.

Regarding the Constitution Amendment Bill, I find from the papers—the hon. Minister said—that the Government have to study all the judgements, several of them, of the Supreme Court before making up their mind. Sir, the Parliament has given powers by amending the Constitution to bring forward suitable measures.

Very wide powers have been conferred on Government. Sometime ago there was supreme court judgement about the newsprint Control. That can easily be put and end to. We may do so by taking recourse to the powers now conferred on Government under the Constitution of India. But, what is being done? What is the the proposal to-day? What have you got in concrete shape to-day? Does not the Constitution authorise the Government to take the necessary steps. What is standing in their way?

We are supporting this Resolution because, we want that this should be done. And this is a step forward. We hope that the Bill to be brought forward will be framed properly and implemented also. I do not know whether the Government is really anxious about bringing forward the Diffusion and Delinking of Monopoly Newspapers as they profess to do.

SHRI ANANTRAO PATIL (Khed):
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Resolution moved by Prof. Mukerjee for de-linking and diffusion of newspapers. This has been the declared policy of this Government. The de-linking and diffusion of newspapers should be pressed by this Resolution. We are only asking

for the implementation of the policy by bringing in a Bill. Our Minister, Shri Gujral, has many a time told this House that the decision stands and that he would not change. There is only an utterance of the Minister and there is no action from him. How would you satisfy the Members? We want a categorical assurance from him whether the Government intends to bring forward this measure during this session or not; if not at least at a later stage. We have been told several times both inside and outside the House by various Ministers including Shrimati Nandini Satpathy, then I. & B. Minister, Shri Raghunatha Reddy, and then Company Affairs Minister and Shri Gokhale, the Law Minister the necessity of de-linking and diffusion of ownership of newspapers. They all said that Government was firm about this. Even our Prime Minister has told in 1971 in a press conference that the Government is considering a draft bill for diffusion and de-linking of newspapers. What has happened to the draft Bill? We do not know about this during the last two years.

The other day, at a function, the President, Shri Giri publicly welcomed the diffusion of ownership and expressed a desire that Government would take a step very soon. The diffusion and delinking of papers that we put forward is a demand. We have been told very often that before taking this step Government has to study the Supreme Court judgements. And in the light of the judgements, Government will have to take this step.

I doubt whether in the name of the Supreme Court judgement Government wants to postpone the decision which they have taken and the party has declared. It is clear that if there is a will there is still a way out. If there is some difficulty in diffusion of ownership, I think there cannot be any difficulty in de-linking of the papers from the big business, as a first step.

It was nearly twenty years back in 1954, that the Press Commission had recommended the diffusion of ownership of newspapers.

16.00 hrs.

At that time, the Commission had studied the Indian press, the state and trend of monopolies, in Indian newspapers and recommended that the best policy would be to form a public trusts and the Co-operative Societies. But nothing has happened. The situation has gone from bad to worse during the last 20 years. As Shri Mukerjee and Shri Chatterjee have said, five or six big business houses having newspapers in chains and groups are dominating the Indian press. They command one third of the circulation, in four metropolitan cities. They are trying to strangulate the small and medium district and regional newspapers.

Now the industry is facing a newsprint crisis. Forty per cent of imported newsprint was being consumed by these big papers, the big chains, for what? Not for giving information or educating the people or the masses, but for printing advertisements.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Is that not information?

SHRI ANANTRAO PATIL: It was 40 per cent advertisements and 60 per cent news ratio recommended by the Press Commission. Now it is the reverse—60 or 70 per cent advertisements and 30 or 40 per cent news. And what news? News which is not concerned with the people, with their problems and education. These papers do not pass information to the people living in rural areas and remote villages. There was scarcity of newsprint and Government put a ban on the number of pages of big newspapers. Big newspapers like the *Statesman* and others have found a way out by bringing out pull-outs devoted to advertisements alone and spending newsprint on it.

As for advertisements, more than 50 per cent come from Government,

semi-government or public corporations and rest from private sector. The lion's share is taken by the big papers. The small and medium and district papers, without advertisements, have to fight to survive; growth is not possible for them. But for their survival they have to fight. Is this a healthy growth of the Indian press or is this a lopsided growth?

The Minister may say that circulation has gone up. There is growth of the Indian press, not of the small and medium papers but of the big papers connected with big business houses.

In 1954, the Press Commission had suggested that if the newspaper industry is to grow in the country, other factors which were very vital and important, should be taken care of. Not only the Press Commission, the Diwakar Commission also recommended that Government should pay more attention to the small and medium papers which are the backbone of the country, which is the mainstay of democracy. But the five or six newspaper combines or, in other words, Birlas, Tatas, Dalmias and Goenkas are trying to hold all the powers of dissemination of news as well as political views to the people. What they have to say, the people have to read. They are not conducting papers except for their own purpose. Under the cry of freedom of the press, they seek freedom to mint money. So the first step which is absolutely necessary, which is easier also, is to delink the press from the big business houses. Then only it will be delinking of the Press. As far as diffusion in ownership is concerned, Government will have to take all these into consideration. As a first step the hon. Minister must phase out a programme of delinking the Press from big business and come forward with that measure during this session. If attention is not paid to the lopsided growth of the Indian papers, I am afraid it will be difficult for any newspaper, especially small and medium papers to exist. There is a cut of 30 per cent newsprint and

[Shri Anantrao Patil]

on the other hand the cost and the expenditure had increased by 40 or 40 per cent. So newspapers will have to cut down their sizes and their circulation, because the small and medium newspapers cannot afford to bear a burden of Rs. 1000 or Rs. 1200 per day which comes to 36,000 per month in some cases which is more than Rs. 3.5 lakhs in a year because of the increase in the cost of these things.

Big newspapers and metropolitan newspapers are still giving 16—20 pages, whereas the small paper finds it difficult to give 6 pages and it has to cut down to 4 pages. Then a four page newspaper has to cut down to two pages. For getting newsprint every newspaper has to get a licence to import. Again for printing machinery, blankets, flongs, monomachines etc., all these items have to be imported from outside even after 25 years of Independence. This situation has to be changed.

The Minister is young, enthusiastic and dynamic. He is concerned about it. If we want to have healthy growth of democracy, eventually small medium, regional and district newspapers have to grow and play their part. He will have to give more attention to them. There should be more healthy cooperation with these newspapers. Only then you can have diffusion and delinking of the press.

I can give you one example. It will show how the concentration is there in the country and monopolistic trends are on the increase. When you talk of monopoly you say you are trying to curb the growth of monopolist tendency in the industry. But we have not taken a single step to arrest the growth of monopoly in this industry. Monopolistic trends are not only on the increase but restrictive trade practices are also rampant. I shall quote an example. The big newspapers give more pages and charge less price and take their morning editions by taxis or by their own vehicles to remote places and boost up their

circulation. They do not allow the agents to sell copies of district or local newspapers. By men, money and material these combines and groups are trying to strangle the small, medium and regional newspapers. These big tycoons and business houses should be asked to delink and diffuse their ownership. The employees must get a share in the management and control of newspaper and people who are running big business houses in the cement and in the jute industry should be asked to delink the press from other businesses and give way to management by the people who are actually working there.

If the Minister is serious, he should not hesitate to take urgent and timely steps and save the small and medium-sized language papers from the calamity which is in store for them.

With these words, I support the Resolution.

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra): Sir, I really do not know what sort of debate we are having, because they talk about diffusion of the press. I wonder whether the diffusion of the press is what they have in their mind or whether it is the diffusion of news, which they want to bring about. I have also heard that they want to delink it from monopoly houses. By all means, delink it from monopoly houses. But what about political parties? Delinking of information from political parties is just as necessary if they want to bring about pristine purity in the news. After that, you must start delinking it from anybody who has a brain because after all, news must be produced in a manner which is so totally fair and aseptic that it does not reflect anybody's personal view or anybody's bias. I suppose this is the whole purpose of the exercise. Otherwise, I do not understand what all this is about. I have a very small paper and I intend that paper should carry my opinion, my ideas, my theories about what should or should not happen.

The sponsor of this resolution, Prof. Mukherjee should know that the CPI has the largest number of publications

in this country. It is the biggest newspaper monopoly in this country, having something like 150 or 168 or 300 publications—I think this information is readily available in the library. Of course, each one may be printing only 5 copies. I cannot help it if nobody wants to read what is printed by them. But the fact of the matter is that the largest number of publications are printed by the party to which the sponsor of the resolution belongs. Unfortunately, I have only one paper. I wish I had 160. I am not blaming him for it. I am only blaming him for having brought this resolution, because I feel it is an attempt to throw dust and dirt into the eyes of the people and to make them believe as though they have some great social purpose in mind in bringing a rather absurd, nonsensical resolution. Poor Prof. Mukherjee is only the victim of all the paraphernalia and the propaganda that has gone on for the last year or two, started no doubt by the Minister for Information and Broadcasting himself, who set the ball rolling by saying, "I am going to bring about a change. The sword of Damocles is hanging over the heads of all journalists and all those who have anything to do with dissemination of news" so that he can in his own sweet, lovable, affectionate and persuasive manner plant his news all over the place for them to carry.

I am really shocked that somebody like Professor Mukherjee, who is still fighting for survival in this country—and, believe me, it is a fight for survival—should want this Government to take charge and get hold of the information and broadcasting media in this country. Nothing would be more monstrous; nothing can be more horrid than to have the Government of India decide what people should read, how much they should read, what they should do and what they should not.

With the present negligible amount of newsprint that the whole of India uses, absolutely paltry and negligible

amount of newsprint they use, they can even otherwise do very little. Now we are going to suffer a cut of 30 per cent on that. The Minister says "what can I do? There is a shortage". Sir, I have been told that there is no shortage at all, that it is an artificial, deliberate shortage that has been created to coerce the press. Therefore, my sincere advice to the press is that if they want their newsprint back again, they should cut out all news concerning Ministers for only one week. They will get all the newsprint they want thereafter. The cut will be restored and this phenomenon of world shortage of newsprint will disappear, will evaporate. The Soviet Union, which has been very difficult and hard about it will immediately supply newsprint, even prices will tumble down, all manner of things will happen, foreign exchange will be readily available and newsprint they will have.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA GOSWAMI (Gauhati): Why don't you try it in your case?

SHRI PILOO MODY: I do not praise them in any case. I write only against them. There is a world of difference.

They will do anything for a little bit of publicity. So, I would give this advice to the newspapers.

While we are having a little fun in this House, I was absolutely horrified and astounded to hear the last speaker talking in all seriousness about diffusion of ownership. I do not think the Government is going to do anything about it. It is only yet another backdoor method of trying to gain control over mass media. I strongly suggest to the mover of this Resolution, Professor Mukerjee—I am sure that he does not intend that Shri Inder Gujral's hands should be further strengthened in the control over mass media—that it is likely to create a situation where no matter how many comrade friends you may have, instead of reporting Banerjee's speeches or your speeches so faithfully, the diffusion will ultimately

[Shri Piloo Mody]

land in Shri Gujral's lap and not in the lap of Shri Dange. Therefore, in order to continue the struggle, in order to preserve your right to fight, I suggest that you leave the press well alone. If there are a few papers which do not like, like the *Statesman*, *Hindustan Times*, *Times of India*, *Indian Express* or the *March of the Nation*, leave them alone. They are doing very little damage to your cause. They would like to do more, but they are succeeding in doing very little damage to your cause. You maintain the right to publish what you like. But who is to know what is right or wrong, what is good or bad? Ultimately, the reader decides it.

After having listened to the last speaker for a moment, I was horrified. I thought he would now suggest that the newspaper should be taken and distributed only in the countryside, particularly in areas where the literacy was very low. No amount of crying about the poor is going to make them rich. I, therefore, suggest to him to go there and teach them to read.

SHRI ANANTRAO PATIL: I am doing it. In fact, I am having my newspaper in a district place.

SHRI PILOO MODY: So, he was also arguing about himself. I have misunderstood him. I thought he was arguing about those who could not read.

SHRI ANANTRAO PATIL: For your information.

SHRI PILOO MODY: This is really remarkable. But this is what is being advanced as an argument. I would recommend that you print in your paper only one statistic that 15 years ago we had 20 crores of illiterate people in this country and today we have 35 crores of illiterate people in this country. Just print that much.

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Akola): That is because of growth of population.

SHRI PILOO MODY: He is more willing to give an explanation. He can be hired as a junior reporter on Mr. Patil's paper. You can ask him to give the explanation for this increase in illiteracy. I am only interested in telling the people that this has been the fruits of the great good God, the big brother, the Government of India, who have been presiding over our destinies. The fact is that illiteracy is going up.

The real purpose of this Resolution is to concentrate power in the hands of the Government. I do not want to see that happening. Let the people print what they like; let the people read what they like. If you do not like what *Statesman* publishes, why do you continue to read it? The best way of punishing a paper is by not reading it. I do not read *New Age* nor do I read *Patriot*. In fact, I print most of my paper on the unprinted copies of the *Patriot*. Be selective. Why do you have to be so indiscriminate that you read everything that is put in front of you. Allow the people to print what they like. Allow the people to read what they like. As far as the *National Herald* is concerned, the Minister was offended when somebody suggested it was handed over to the brewer; it was handed over to a smuggler. If he is not a smuggler, it would have been handed over to somebody else. One thing is sure that they cannot run it. It has to be handed over to somebody. If they can think only of monopoly houses, brewers, smugglers, tax-evaders, whatever have you, it is the tragedy of our nation, not of the newspaper industry.

The fact is that we have not created the type of society where the illiterate mind can comprehend and see and visualise a perspective of the nation, can start a paper and run it economically. One of the main reasons is that the biggest advertiser in the country is the Government of India and, because it is the biggest advertiser in this country,

it can screw or use its screw in a manner whereby such a person has no chance of survival. They will use advertising only to promote political causes and, occasionally, to help their partners over here.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sometimes you also.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Sometimes their friends also. I am admitting it. Is he prepared to admit it?

In conclusion, I suggest to my hon. friend, Shri H. N. Mukerjee, that we have had enough, we have had our game, everybody has been able to make political propoganda, abusing the monopoly houses, hoarders and black-marketeers, as they should be. But thereafter, I say, this is a serious business, newspaper reporting, dissemination of news, particularly of mass media, and far too important a matter to be entrusted into the hands of amateur parliamentarians.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE (Betul): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I welcome the resolution moved by Shri H. N. Mukerjee which seeks to call upon Government to adopt certain measures for delinking the press and diffusing the ownership of newspapers and which, I consider, were long overdue.

So far as Shri Piloo Mody is concerned, his observations were saturated with an obsession that such delinking and diffusion will, once for all, destroy the freedom of the Press. That is what he seems to have conveyed in his long speech that he made. It is a matter of opinion—he has his own way of thinking. He thinks that the step, which we consider is the step in the right direction to strengthen the freedom of the press and to bring about a healthy atmosphere in Indian journalism, will, according to him, destroy the freedom of the press. That is the version.

I agree with most of the principles which were enunciated by Shri Chatterjee so far as the basic requirements of delinking the Press and the diffusion of the ownership are concerned. But I wonder whether he was well-

advised in raising political issues which were not germane at all to this resolution and creating unnecessary controversies in the matter. It is not as if his Party has men who are all paragons of virtue and all other Party members are crooks. I really wish a person of his eminence—I have tremendous regard for him—on a resolution like this had shown greater restraint, and that would have lent greater objectivity to his contribution, instead of abusing Congressmen.

The freedom of ownership of the Press is a concept entirely different from the concept of freedom of the Press. I want my friend Mr. Piloo Mody to understand this distinction. So far as the Constitution is concerned . . . (*Interruption*) I do not know how many times Mr. Piloo Mody has seen the first and the last cover of the Constitution. In my humble way I have read the Constitution several times. . . (*Interruptions*). Even if he reads he will never be able to understand. He has not understood it nor will he ever understand the spirit of the Constitution. He has himself admitted it. Is he satisfied with the growth of the newspaper industry in the country so far? Why has not newspaper industry grown in the manner it should have? It is an extremely sensitive media, it is an extremely important media. The purpose of every newspaper is to mobilise public opinion. The purpose of every newspaper is to educate public opinion. In a country like ours where we have our roots in democratic traditions, the purpose and task of the newspapers is extremely onerous and cumbersome. The newspaper industry in our country has not grown up for the simple reason that a few persons, a few money-bags, a cartel is having a strangle-hold on the industry . . . (*Interruptions*). What I considered as utter, undiluted non-sense from Shri Mody. I listened to with attention. I beg you to listen to my views. You may disagree with them. We may agree to disagree. However, it is this monopolistic stranglehold which has resulted in completely dis-

[Shri N. K. P. Salve]

proportionate growth and an imbalance brought about in this industry as a whole. A few papers have grown.

There is one more aspect of the matter which has not been properly analysed. Public Funds have been utilised by big business houses. All these people, all these money-bags whose names Shri Patil mentioned, are utilising public funds to aggrandise certain vested interests. They have large public funds available to them. They own the press. And what is worse, they are able to hire able writers, journalists and penman and with their help they want to support and canvas certain private causes. Nothing can be more deleterious, nothing can be more vicious and nothing can be more pernicious for the growth and for the healthy growth of freedom of the Press than this state

So far as small newspapers are concerned, they face a lot of financial difficulties and Shri Patil has narrated them. It is the imparative responsibility, inalienable responsibility of the Government to ensure suitable assistance to them—it does not matter what sort of opinion they voice, for after all, as I submitted, the Press is a sensitive media. Its purpose is to mobilise public opinion. Its purpose is to educate public opinion. Its purpose is to carry dissent to the corridors of power, if necessary. How can its bonafides be accepted if dissent is taken to the corridors of power by vested monopolists.

Therefore, delinking and diffusion of ownership of press is necessary. Let it be understood clearly that people who voice opinion against that of the Government against the ruling Party are not motivated by any unholy considerations or by jingling of coins but only by the consideration of the welfare of the community as a whole. If Newspapers are to cater to the weal and welfare of the community as a whole, I cannot understand how any Private ownership or ownership by a cartel can ever

be considered consistent with this sort of a concept.

Shri Gujral has made the Government stand utterly clear. I really do not know what stands in the way of the Government of India taking effective steps in the matter. Not many steps are needed to bring about delinking and diffusion of ownership. Today we are not able to buy an upto-date machinery for an up-to-date press, because those machineries are not manufactured here. This is the situation even after 25 years of independence, when 580 million people are to be taught, opinion has to be mobilised, we cannot have a modern up-to-date press machinery of our own. We cannot have such machinery purchased in India. With regard to the newsprint, we have to depend upon foreign countries; we have to buy this from foreign countries. I would tell you that the growth of newspapers industry is utterly distorted, the growth is devoid of any direction. It is suffering only for one reason, that those who were in charge so far held the newspaper industry to ransom for vested interests, they were never worried about it, they had sufficient funds, they had sufficient amount and resources available with them to carry on what they thought was of supreme importance to themselves and what was of supreme importance to them was their own personal gains and nothing else. In this view of the matter I have no doubt that Mr. Gujral, when he replies to the debate, would tell us about the take, to make sure that there is delinking and diffusion of ownership.

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी (शाजापुर):

सभापति महोदय, समाचार-पत्र और सप्ताहिक चित्रण संस्था, इन दोनों की स्वाधीनता बिसंबद्ध कैसे की जाये—इस पर आज हम विचार कर रहे हैं। पहले तो थोड़ी सी इसकी पृष्ठभूमि देखनी आवश्यक है कि यह विचार आया क्यों। कांग्रेस में फूट होने के बाद बम्बई में जब अधिवेशन हुआ तो उस अधिवेशन पर कई

टीका-टिप्पणियां आई जो अच्छी नहीं लगीं इसलिए पत्रकारों को बुलाकर बताया गया बल्कि मैं तो कहूंगा कि धमकी दी गई—
I will fix you within a minute. I will fix your proprietor within a minute.
यह मैं 1969 की बात बता रहा हूं जब बम्बई में डूबते हुए सूरज को साक्षी लेकर चव्हाण साहब ने कहा था कि हम समाजवाद लाकर रहेंगे। सवाल आखिर यह है कि लोकतंत्र जहां पर है वहां पर विचारों की स्वतन्त्रता हो और यह उसका एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है। मुझे लगता है कि साल्वे जी, पाटिल जी या जो भी चाहते हैं कि वृत्त-पत्र और समाचार वितरण संस्था की विस्मृद्ध स्वाधीनता हो, वे विचारों की स्वतन्त्रता भी जरूर चाहते हैं। आज इस में जो बुराई आई है वह केवल वृत्त-पत्र की व्यवस्था में नहीं आई है बल्कि सारा समाज बिगड़ गया है। आज सभी चीज धर्म के नाते नहीं धंधे के नाते हम करते हैं चाहे पुजारी हो, मठ हो, मन्दिर हो यहां तक राजनीतिक दल हो तो सभी में बुराई आई है। इस तरह आज हम हर क्षेत्र में एक अपना ही सर्वस्व स्थापित करने की प्रक्रिया देखते हैं तो उस बुराई को निकालना बहुत आवश्यक है। मैं हमेशा कहूंगा —

Hate the sin, not the sinner. There is sin behind everything; behind monopolising everything.

क्योंकि मेरा तो सरकार की नीयत पर शक है, नीति पर नहीं। नीति कोई भी होगी उसको व्यवहार में कैसे लाया जाता है सवाल वही है। 1971 में जब आपने गरीबी हटाओ की बात कही तो हमने भी कहा—

Let there be war on poverty.

किन्तु जब आपने देखा 1973 तक गरीबी नहीं हट रही है, लोग चिल्ला रहे हैं तो एक नयी आवाज आ रही है —

Let there be limited dictatorship.

यानी आवाज बन्द, बोलिये नहीं। यह मैं नीयत की बात बता रहा हूं। तीन साल में गरीबी

हटाने के बजाय ये गरीबी की आवाज दबाकर गरीब का गला घोटना, यह चालू है। तीन साल के बाद हरिजन और पिछड़े वर्गों पर अत्याचार घटने के बजाये बढ़ क्यों रहे हैं? यह तो समाज में जो वातावरण पदा करते हैं उसी का यह परिणाम है। मैं किसी को दोष देना नहीं चाहता हूं, हम सभी उसके लिए जिम्मेदार हैं। तो समाचार-पत्र में कुछ आया हुआ है, यदि सरकार डिप्यूजिंग दि अनरशिप करती है तो करे किन्तु मुझे डर है —

Diffusion of newspapers will ultimately mean refusing the ownership to any private individual.

यहां आकर वह खड़ा होगा। आखिर हम विकेन्द्रीयकरण चाहते हैं, हर जगह पर चाहते हैं। राजनीतिक सत्ता का भी विकेन्द्रीयकरण चाहते हैं लेकिन वह कहां है? लोकतन्त्र विकेन्द्रीयकरण के आधार पर चलता है लेकिन आज हर चीज एक व्यक्ति पर लटकी हुई है—चाहे वह आंध्र की समस्या हो, तेलंगाना की समस्या हो—क्या यह लोकतन्त्र है? यानी एक राजनीतिक मोनोपली पैदा हो गई है, एक व्यक्ति में ही सारा केन्द्रीयकरण हुआ है। क्या यह आपको मंजूर है? पोलिटिकल अफेयर्स कमेटी हो तो हम समझ सकते हैं किन्तु एक व्यक्ति पर हर चीज केन्द्रित हो, आप चाहते हैं विकेन्द्रीयकरण और करते हैं केन्द्रीयकरण, इसीलिए मैं चाहता हूं कि सवाल नीति का नहीं नीयत का है। इसलिए आज यह जो मोनोपली पैदा हुई है कोई भी नहीं समझेगा कि यह मोनोपली अच्छी है। हम किसी भी तरह की, किसी भी मोनोपली के विरुद्ध हैं।

यदि हमारे मुकर्जी साहब का "डीलिंकिंग" का मतलब यह है कि हमारे प्रस को फारेन कंट्रीज से डीलिंग करना चाहते हैं, उनका विदेशों के साथ जो लिंक है उसको तोड़ना चाहते हैं तो मैं इस के पक्ष में हूं। किन्तु जब वहां यह बताया जाता है कि किसी व्यक्ति को बाहर से रुपया आया आठ लाख,

[श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी]

वह कहां से आया उसका सोर्स इसक्वोज नहीं करेगे वह आठ लाख रुपया ब्याज में लगाया जो एकदम 16 लाख हो गया। वह कहां लगाया गया? भ्रष्टाचार में, मैं भ्रष्टाचार का नाम लेना नहीं चाहता। तो वह कहां से आया? यदि मुकर्जी साहब इसको डीलिय करना चाहत हैं तो हम इस के पक्ष में हैं। यदि विदेश इस दृष्टि से हमारे विचार पर हावी होना चाहता है कि फ्रीम टायप ट वाटम बड़-बड़े विज्ञापन दे और उसके बल बूते पर भ्रष्टाचार वालों को अपने वचस्व में रखने की कोशिश करे तो यह जसा विदेशों में चलता है वही सरकार भी करती है क्योंकि इसका उद्देश्य वही है। यह जो बिल की बात है, जब श्रीमती नन्दिनी सत्यपी थी तो उसका प्रारूप भ्रष्टाचार में धा बुका है कि 15 हजार से ज्यादा जिनका सर्कुलेशन होगा उनके लिए सरकार कुछ करेगी। यानी तत्काल लटकती रहेगी कि हमारे विचारों को प्राथमिकता मिलनी चाहिए, दूसरों के विचारों को प्राथमिकता नहीं मिलनी चाहिए। आप कहते हैं हम बिकेन्द्रीयकरण में विश्वास करते हैं इसीलिए मैं बार बार बता रहा हूँ कि सवाल नीति का नहीं, तुम्हारी नीयत का है। भाल इडिया रेडियो के बारे में जब सरकार ने स्वयं चन्दा कमेटी नियुक्त की थी और उस कमेटी ने यह सिफारिश दी कि एक कार्पोरेशन होना चाहिए तो आज तक वह होता क्यों नहीं है? वह सिफारिश स्वीकार क्यों नहीं की जाती है?

यदि सरकार की नीति यह है कि सब पक्ष तक विचार पहुंचे और हर एक को अपने विचार की खुली स्वाधीनता और छूट हो तो आज हमारा जो हवाईजहाज चलता है, मैं देखता हूँ स्टेटमैन से लेकर पैट्रियट सभी हैं लेकिन मदनमौड वहां क्यों नहीं है? आखिर वह भी एक विचार प्रकट करता है। यानी जब विचार की खुली छूट है तो मैं प्युनता चाहता हूँ मदनमौड वहां पर क्यों नहीं है जहाँ पर पैट्रियट भी है।

It represents the political affiliation; it represents the political opinion.

मैं बताना चाहता हूँ आप बीरे-बीरे रेडिकलिज्म के नाम पर वहां जा रहे हैं जहां दम घुट जायेगा, जहां पर स्वाधीनता समाप्त हो जायेगी, उसी घोर आप भ्रष्टाचार होते जा रहे हैं।

जहां तक लिट्रेसी की बात है, मैं बताना चाहता हूँ

If there is any monopoly in the press today, it is the English monopoly.

यह असली मोनोपली है जिसकी वजह से हमारे जो लैब्रेज पेपर्स हैं वह पनप नहीं पा रहे हैं। यह सरकार भी महत्व किनको देती है? प्रधान मंत्री कहीं बाहर गई तो लैब्रेज पेपर का पत्रकार क्या वहां जायेगा? नहीं (व्यवधान) आजकल प्रोटेस्ट के बाद थोड़ा थोड़ा होने लगा है किन्तु इनके दिमाग में जो प्राथमिकता आती है, जो मोनोपली है वह अंग्रेजी की है। मैं भारतवर्ष में केवल केरल में देखा है कि त्रिचूर से एक अंग्रेजी भ्रष्टाचार चलाने की कोशिश हुई लेकिन वह चल नहीं पाया। केरल में ज्यादातर मल्लालम के पेपर पढ़ते हैं। ऐसा मैंने केवल केरल में देखा।

श्री सतपाल कपूर (पटियाला): मदनमौड को अंग्रेजी में क्यों छपा, हिंदी में क्यों नहीं छपा?

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी: आप लोगों को समझाने के लिए, दूसरा हमारे पास कोई चारा नहीं है।

We want to remove the thorn by using the thorn. When once you remove the thorn, you throw away the thorn.

तो ममझदारों को ममझाने की दृष्टि से ऐसा करना पड़ता है। किन्तु यदि आप मोनोपली समाप्त करना चाहते हैं तो जो अंग्रेजी की मोनोपली मध्य देश में प्रेम की है उस का जब तक समाप्त नहीं करेगे जब तक मनुष्य पेपर्स नहीं पनप सकते हैं। माननीय अनन्त राव पाटिल आपका पेपर भी नहीं पनप

सकती है। इसलिए सरकार को छोटे पेपर्स की आवश्यकता कैसे पूरी की जाये इसको देखना होगा।

अभी एका एक बताया गया कि 30 30 परसेंट न्यूज प्रिन्ट कटा हम में तो कई ऐम्प्लॉईज बेकार हो जायेंगे। पहले जो चार पेज का छोटा पेपर निकालते थे उन की तो हम फट के कारण लगेटी ही रह जायेंगी। अभी कुछ दिन पहले चर्चा आयी थी कि आउटड नट रशिया को क्यों भज रहे हैं तो बताया गया कि अच्छी बैरायटी है, लेकिन आज वही परम मिल कहने वाला देश 1300 ६० टन बाम्बे कामज का हम से 1900 ६० पर टन के हिसाब से दाम लेना है, और उस पर 30 परसेंट कट, तो ऐसी स्थिति में छोटे पेपर चलेंगे ही नहीं। और उस पर भी सरकार विज्ञापन देने में आनाकानी करती है। इस से विकेन्द्रीकरण और विचारों की स्वतन्त्रता नहीं हो सकती है। आप आल इंडिया रेडियो को कोरपोरेसन बनाने के लिये तैयार नहीं हुए, इसलिये धीरे धीरे जब एक बार बड़े प्रोनर्स चले जायेंगे, मैं मानता हूँ कि चले जायेंगे, जैसा बड़ी मिल्स के बारे में हुआ कि बड़ी बड़ी मिल्स चला नहीं सकें तो आप ने उन में ऐम्प्लॉईज को कोआपरेटिव फॉर्मेशन कर के, सिक मिल्स कोरपोरेसन के नाते फिर से उन मिल्स को अपनी छत्रछाया में ले लिया। बड़े बड़े पेपर प्रोनर्स चले जायेंगे, लेकिन उन की जगह आप आ जायेंगे।

आज भी 'हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स' को छोड़कर 'टाइम्स आफ इंडिया' से ले कर और जिनने पेपर्स हैं कोई भी मुनाफे में नहीं चलता है। तो कल जाकर जब डिफ्यूजन हो जायेगा और आठ साहब और मैं प्रोनर बन जायेंगे, तो कैम पर मुनाफे पर चला पायेंगे जब तक कि वही से कोई सहायता न हो? मैं मान लिये बिना वताना चाहता हूँ दिल्ली के एक अखबार को जिनको जिस वितरण संस्था का 60,000 ६० डेना था, बन फाइने

मानिन्वा एक सज्जन आ गये और पैसा दे गये और चलेगये। हर महीने में एक बी० आई० पी० आता है और और दो लाख रुपया देना है हम तरह से अखबार चलता है। तो कल जा कर जब डिफ्यूजन हो जायेगा और अखबार बन्द हो जायेगा उस को सिक न्यूज पेपर के नाम से माननीय गुजराल साहब के अनायास में जाना पड़ेगा। फिर चलायेंगे कौन? वही। क्योंकि पेपर देना उन के हाथ में है, मशीनरी मगाने का अधिकार उन के पास है, नाइसेस मिलेगा या नहीं इसका भी निर्णय करने का अधिकार सरकार के हाथ में है, मशीनरी रूस से आयेगी या जर्मनी से, तो जब हर जगह पर हर चीज के लिये सरकार पर निर्भर करना पड़ता है, मशीनरी के लिये पेपर के लिये, विज्ञापन के लिये ऐसी हालत में जो पेपर पहले ही मुश्किल से चल रहा है उस को और दबाने की दृष्टि से कोशिश हो रही है।

जहाँ तक कम्युनिस्टों का सवाल है, और कम्युनिष्ट पार्टी आफ इंडिया का सवाल है, तो मैं भी रुम गया हूँ, क्या विचारों की स्वाधीनता बहा है? खुश्बीब को क्यों निकाला गया किसी अखबार में छपा? आखिर इन के मामले जो आदर्श पेश हैं उसी के रास्ते पर तो यह चलेंगे? तो डिफ्यूजन के मामले में बहा जा कर पहुँचेंगे?। इसलिये मैं माननीय साठे और माननीय सत्यनाथ कपूर जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि इन की पूछ पकड़ कर आप कहा जा रहे हैं? जैसा कल माननीय पीलू मोदी साहब ने बताया आपने कामरेडों के साथ आप you are going deeper and deeper into the ditch

आप विकेन्द्रीकरण चाहते हैं, हम भी इस को अच्छा समझते हैं और चाहते हैं कि धर्म के नाते अखबार चलें, विचारों का प्रसार करने के नाते पैसा कमाने की दृष्टि से नहीं। अगर इस दृष्टि से काम किया जायेगा तो काम करने वालों को पेट पालने के लिए पंसा मिल सकता है और अखबार की भी सम्पत्ती हो, तब काम

[श्री जयन्तराव राव जोशी]

बनेगा, नहीं ती नहीं। तो क्या सरकार बता सकती है कि छोटा सा पेपर, जैसे श्री जयन्तराव पाटिल का अखबार है, उस के भी पीछे एक ताकत है इसलिये वह अखबार चल रहा है, लेकिन किसी का समर्थन पीछे न होते हुए आज अखबार चलाना मुश्किल हो गया है। इसलिए वास्तव में हम का जो उद्देश्य विकेन्द्रीकरण करने का है, छोटे अखबार, लैंग्वेज पेपर्स में विचार खुले रूप से व्यक्त हो, वहाँ काम करने सेवा कर्मचारियों के साथ न्यायोचित व्यवहार हो और वह भी उस में भागीदार हों, यदि ये विचार प्रत्यक्ष रूप से आ जायेंगे तो हमारे विचार चालाक्याइयों भी दो, चार ग्रेजर्स लेंगा कमसे कम उस अखबार में हमारी छोटी सी बात तो छप जायेगी। आज जो बिल्कुल ब्लैक माउट होता है वह तो नहीं होगा।

16.47 hrs.

[SHRI N. K. P. SALVE in the Chair]

मैं ने कहा नीयत जो आप की है, उस को हमें देखना है कि अल्टीमेटली आप पहुँचेंगे कहाँ डिप्लोमेटिक प्रोनेरशिप के नाम पर हर चीज हम चलायेंगे। यह जो एकाधिकार का विचार है, इस के हम विरोधी हैं। और आज भी लटकती हुई तलवार उन के सर पर रख कर इन का गला दबाता और अपनी चाल पर चलाने की की कोशिश करना यह खराब है। जगन्निग उमका उद्देश्य भले ही अच्छा हो बिन्तु प्रत्यक्ष व्यवहार में उस को प्रतिरक्ति विचारों की निषेधना और विधायकों को वसुधा मयान्त करने के लिये तानी। मनीय हम उमका उद्देश्य नहीं कर सकते।

SHRI K. HANUMANTHAIYA (Bangalore) Freedom of the Press is a very precious and fundamental aspect of a truly run democracy. Our party is wedded to the freedom of the Press. Many of us here fought for the freedom of the Press. Many of us here fought for the freedom of the country. That freedom has many facets; one is personal freedom; the other is freedom of the Press and

freedom of movement and other fundamental rights. It is nobody's case that the freedom of the Press should be suppressed or oppressed or distorted. The position in the country today reveals that this freedom is being misused. There is a famous saying that the Press is the Fourth Estate, after Parliament, judiciary, and the Executive. If you take away the freedom of the Press, it adversely affects the function of the other three Estates.

The question today is whether that freedom has been used properly or improperly and whether freedom has been used by all people improperly or whether it has been used improperly only by a few people. The last 25 years show that the freedom of the Press had been taken advantage of by certain individuals and certain industrial houses to promote their own interest. The freedom of the Press was meant to safeguard and promote the progress of the country and uphold justice. Some papers have gone on using the Fourth Estate for their personal ends. In the States many unscrupulous contractors started newspapers in order to bring influence to bear upon the Ministry and upon the authorities, political and governmental. They have continuously done so for the last 25 years and distorted the working of democracy. They have led them to the ways of corruption, bribery and nepotism.

They promote the selfish interests of the owner, whether an individual or a company. It is this abuse that is being tackled. I am happy this idea is being tackled so seriously, though some of us misunderstand the motive of the mover, because he belongs to a particular party. In a democracy, even if a motion is brought by the Prime Minister, the opposition opposes it because it is the opposition. Likewise, many a time because a particular proposition is sponsored by a particular party with whose ideology we do not agree, we oppose it whether we like it or not. Just as Parliament has to be impartial and personal

interests have to be given up, so should the press do and personal interest should not count, much less the motives of profit-making or distorting the working of democracy. There is the right to freedom of movement. But if a thief comes and steals Mr. Mody's property, he would complain and would not mind this so-called freedom of movement being curtailed in the interests of justice and law and order. If the same argument is made applicable to the fourth estate, nobody who claims to enjoy the benefits of the freedom of the press can be allowed to utilise that very organ for personal profit. Today we are not attacking the freedom of the press. But where this freedom is being misused and abused, it is that misuse and abuse that we want to prevent.

If democracy has come to this stage where many of us have begun to entertain doubts whether democracy is the best form of government for us, one of the sources of the pollution is the kept press. Just as a kept woman is the most contemptible individual in society, kept press either by a contractor or by a house for personal profit is the most contemptible thing one can think of. It is about this kept press that all of us are exercised in our minds. It is not easy to find a solution. It is this kept press that has to be brought to book and made to serve the interests of the country and not the profit or selfish motives of any particular individual, however high he may be in any political party or elsewhere. The press is so sacrosanct that it cannot be used for personal profit. Under Government service rules an ICS or IAS officer or even a minister is not allowed to have any business connection. If he is a director of a company, he should resign and free himself to do his work impartially and justly, so that he may not be weighed down by the consideration of the interests of that company. We have to apply this very same principle to the press. This sacred fourth estate should not be

used for personal profit, to distort democracy, to take bribes, etc.

Diffusion and delinking would serve that purpose to some extent. I am not agreeing wholly with the wording of the resolution. All the evils I see in the kept press cannot be removed by this simple resolution. I agree with delinking. In a democratic country, the press should be free and it should not be at the behest of one foreign country or other. It should be patriotic and serve the interests of our country, not subserve the interests of this or that big power. I am very happy the mover has used the word 'delinking'. There is in fact linked press in this country and delinking has to be done not only in the case of business houses and unscrupulous contractors but also in the case of foreign countries. That is a welcome proposition.

We have to evolve proper standards for the press. It is a very difficult thing to do. Standards have to be enforced by law. It cannot be done by passing a simple resolution. What is diffusion, we must understand. 'Delinking' must be defined. These are matters which have to be considered at great length by the House either by a general discussion or by a committee or commission. I can give any number of instances where the kept press has distorted the political picture, spoiled ministers, etc. This is not the occasion to go into all that.

While I give my general support to the resolution, it is for the Government to see how far, to what extent and in what manner this idea of making the fourth estate work impartially could be implemented.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur):
Sir, I support the resolution and I support those hon. members who suggested that the news agencies like PTL and UNI should also be converted into public corporations.

17 00 hrs.

I am not speaking because the resolution is there, but this is also one

[Shri S. M. Banerjee]

of the recommendations of the Press Commission. I do not know and I would like to know from the Minister what stands in the way of converting the PTI, UNI, the Samachar Bharati and the Hindustan Samachar into a public corporation. I really do not know. Mr. Piloo Mody is not here and Mr. Jagannatha Rao Joshi also has conveniently walked out. But let them also realise that we want news should be controlled in this country. I am one of those who really believe in the Press and whenever there is a scope I congratulate them. The whole question is this: Freedom for what. Freedom for blackmailing? Freedom for championing the cause of those who loot this country—these big sharks? Who is controlling the *Hindustan Times* today? Mr. Birla. Who is controlling the *Indian Express*? It is Mr. Goenka. Who is controlling the *Statesman*? It is Mr. Tata. Who is controlling the *Times of India*? It is Mr. Sahu Jain or Mr. Shanti Prasad Jain. I do not know whether it is Mr. Alok Jain to-day (*Interruptions*). It is these big business houses which are controlling the jute industry, the textile industry, even the engineering industry, aluminium industry which are controlling the Press. That is why we call it the 'Jute press'. Who are the Directors in the various Boards of PTI and UNI? You will find the same persons. I am in the PTI Employees' Federation and I have been intimately connected with UNI. What is happening? When the PTI employees wanted bonus, they threatened to go on a strike. These people said that UNI will be used against PTI. When there was victimisation in the UNI, as was very correctly mentioned by my friend, Mr. Chatterjee, they said, 'All right, go ahead with your strike. We will pitch PTI against you.' This is the trouble in having common directors.

Sir, I am one of those who support the PTI and UNI be converted into a public corporation but I want that it should also be converted into an

international news agency like the Reuters. The whole difficulty is that it should be taken out of the clutches of those who belong to the monopoly houses who are exploiting the masses, who bleed the common man white and our request to the Government is: let them stand by their commitment, the solemn promises made by them here in this House or outside either by Shrimati Nandini Satpathy who was then the Minister or by Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral. Both of them made promises to both the Houses, the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha and even in the Central Hall. I want to know what happened to those assurances. (*Interruptions*). Let them fulfil their assurances and let this resolution be adopted and better assurances be given and Mr. Piloo Mody need not worry. Even after this particular resolution is passed and the diffusion of press ownership Bill is passed in this House, there will be enough space for cartoons. So, let him not bother about it. So mere attack on the CPI and my Party paper is no good. I suggest and I request and I appeal to Shri Gujral to accept this resolution.

Let them not be afraid of the jute press; they may publish so many things but the people of this country have to be saved from these exploiters. One way of saving them is to have this Resolution adopted. The monopoly houses should not be allowed to hold the country to ransom. Banking, General Insurance and Mines have been taken over by the Government. Let Shrimati Indira Gandhi who has said so many things during the election, not slide back, but let her take a bold decision. In respect of whatever they have promised in this House and outside, they should stand by them. They should bring forward the necessary Bill for this purpose. We shall all pass it without any discussion. I assure the the journalists, the employees and the intellectuals of this country that nothing will be done to curb the freedom of the Press. Mr. Birla said

the other day that he can purchase any intellectual on a salary of Rs. 1000 or Rs. 1200. He should be put in his proper places. I am sure that if this Resolution is adopted, it will be hailed by all sections of our people, with the exception of Mr. Mody, Mr Bisla and others.

श्री सतपाल कपूर (पटियाला) - सभा पति महोदय, इस हाउस में आज जो विचार स्वतन्त्र पार्टी के मेम्बर ने श्री पं. लू. मोदी, श्रीर जनसच के मेम्बर रखे हैं, ये उन के कोई नये विचार नहीं हैं। इस मुल्क में जब जब भी कोई ऐसा सवाल आया कि सरमाया-दारी की किसी ताकत पर चोट लगाई जाये, उस वक्त स्वतन्त्र पार्टी और जनसच ने सरमायादारी की वकालत करने का कोई मौका नहीं छोडा। चाहे बैंक रेगनलराइजेशन का सवाल हो, सबिधान को एमेड करने का सवाल हो और चाहे राजा-महाराजाओं के प्रिवी परम बन्द करने का सवाल हो, हम हमेशा उन की ये दलीले सुनते रहे हैं, भले ही अलग अलग मौकों पर उन के अलफाज बदलते रहे हो।

स्वतन्त्र पार्टी और जनसच के मेम्बर श्री एन्टरप्राइज की फिलासफ्री को रिजेक्ट करते हैं और इस रेजोल्यूशन पर उन की स्पीचिज उन की इन पालिसी के ऐन मुताबिक ही है। उन की पार्टी और उन के अखबारों का, मारा, मकसद सिर्फ एक ही है कि इस मुल्क में सोशलिस्ट इक्विमोमी नहीं होनी चाहिये, फी एन्टरप्राइज होना चाहिए। जब भी इलैक्शन हुआ है, चाहे बहू लोक सभा का इलैक्शन हो और चाहे विधान सभा का इलैक्शन हो, इस मुल्क के लोगों ने इन पार्टियों के इस तजरिये को रिजेक्ट किया ह।

श्री बिभूति मिश्र (मोतीहारी) - वे आवे भी रिजेक्ट करेगे।

श्री सतपाल कपूर वे आवे भी रिजेक्ट करेगे। मुक है, माननीय सदस्य भी यह मानते हैं। (अखबार) अगर एक सीट

से—बाका के—किसी दूसरी पार्टी का मेम्बर जीत गया, तो इस का मतलब यह तो नहीं है कि सारे देश के लोग उन के साथ हैं।

मैं किसी अखबार का नाम नहीं लेना चाहता हूँ, लेकिन जितने बड़े मानोपनी पेपर्स हैं, वे तमाम फ्री एन्टरप्राइज की फिलासफी को सपोर्टस करते हैं। जब भी कोई क्राइसिस आया है, ये तमाम बड़े अखबार और पी० टी० आई०, यू० एन० आई०, हिन्दुस्तान समाचार और समाचार भारती बगैरह तमाम बड़ी न्यूज एजेंसीज सिर्फ एक ही पालिसी को सपोर्ट करती रही हैं और बह है फ्री एन्टरप्राइज की पालिसी। इस मुल्क में फ्री एन्टरप्राइज के साथ कौन कौन सी पार्टिया ताल्लुक रखती हैं और इस मुल्क के बाहर कौन कौन सी ताकतें इस फिनांसकी के साथ ताल्लुक रखती हैं, और उन का ग्रापम में क्या रिजेशन है, इस का मवूत है या नहीं, लेकिन यह फैक्ट है कि दिमागी तौर पर उन का यह रिजेशन है कि वे सब फ्री एन्टरप्राइज की फिनांसकी को सपोर्ट करते हैं।

इस मुल्क में बड़े पेपर्स ने कभी भी हैल्दी पालिटिकम को हाईलाइट नहीं किया है, जिस का ताल्लुक जनता के साथ है। हमारे मुल्क के अग्रम मसलो के निये बड़े अखबारों में कोई जगह नहीं है। ट्रेड यूनियन्ज, टिनाट्स, यूथ बेलफैयर बगैरह के बारे में इन बड़े अखबारों में शायद कभी किसी कोने में कोई छोटी सी खबर छप जाये। अगर पजाब और हरियाणा में अनाज की पैदावार बढ़ जाये, या बहा बारह तेरह हजार मीन लम्बी सड़क बनाई जाये और उस का मारा अर्थबर्क लॉग फ्री करे, तो उस की कोई खबर आप हिन्दुस्तान के बड़े अखबार में नहीं देखेंगे।

इतना बड़ा इनकलाव पिछले साल हुआ कि हरियाणा के हर गांव को सड़क चली गई और इस साल के अन्त तक पजाब के हर गांव को सड़क चली जायेगी और महतमाम अर्थबर्क

[श्री सतपाल कपूर]

की आप फास्ट लोगो ने किया लेकिन इसकी खबर आप किसी भी बड़े अखबार में नहीं देखेंगे। पार्टीज में रिपट हों, यहाँ पर स्कैंडल की बात आए, आप किसी पर इलजाम लगायें तो वह चीज आ जायेगी। वह भ्राम्यता कि पोलिटिकल लाईफ में वे लोग है जो स्केडल करते हैं, पावर के लिए लड़ते हैं बेमिक बात की तरफ ये बड़े अखबार वाले कभी नहीं जाते। बेमिक प्रभावलम की तरफ कभी नहीं जाते।

तो भुजमग माहव को कहना है वह तो वह जानते ही है। इम्पीडमेंट गवर्नमेंट इन रेजोल्यूशन को मान ले तो मैं खुश होऊंगा, मुबारकबाद दूंगा। नहीं तो एक नववीज मैं देना चाहूंगा कि हमने बहुत सा फॉरेन एक्सचेंज दे कर बड़ी बड़ी प्रिन्टिंग मशीन मंगा कर उन को दी है। वे प्रिन्टिंग मशीनें अन्डरवुटिलाउंड हैं। टाइम्स आफ इन्डिया स्टेट्समैन, इन्डियन एक्सप्रेस, हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स ये तमाम अखबार छापने में जो इनके पाम मशीनरी है वह तीन घंटे में ज्यादा काम नहीं करती। गार्गे बड़े अखबारों की मशीनरी प्रेस वुटिलाउंड है। गवर्नमेंट इम्पीडमेंटली एक काम कर सकती है कि प्रिन्टिंग मशीनरी उन तमाम बड़े पेरसों की जिन के लिए हम न फॉरेन एक्सचेंज दिया है, उन को नेशनल आइडर कर लें। उन मशीनरी पर कंट्रोल कर के अगर यह कर सकते हैं कि जब भी कोई आदमी यह सोचता है कि वह कोई अखबार निकाले या दस जर्नलिस्ट मिल कर कोई अखबार निकालना चाहते हैं तो उन के पाम पैसा नहीं होना, थोड़ा बहुत पैसा होना भी तो उस में वह पैसा नहीं लगा सकते, तो जो नये जर्नलिस्ट हैं या जो नवज्वकार जर्नलिस्ट हैं उन से आप कहिए कि आप अपना अखबार छापिए, गवर्नमेंट उन पैसा में इन्जाम कर सकती हैं। बांज मीकात एसा मीका प्राता है कि टेकरट बुकम स्कूलों और कालिजों की नहीं छप पाती। तो यह तमाम मशीनरी अगर आप नेशनलाइज कर लें तो स्कूलों की और कालिजों की किताबें छापने के लिए और नये जर्नलिस्ट के अखबार छापने

के लिए आप एक नया स्टोर खोल सकते हैं। हमारी एक बात मैं कहना चाहता हूँ: गवर्नमेंट के पास कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं होती चाहिए कि आप न्यूजप्रिन्ट दें और उस के अन्दर एडवर्टाइजमेंट छपे। न्यूजप्रिन्ट फॉर न्यूज होना चाहिए। न्यूजप्रिन्ट फॉर एडवर्टाइजमेंट या न्यूजप्रिन्ट फॉर प्रॉफिट आप बन्द कर दें। उस पर सीलिंग आप लगा रहे हैं 25 प्रतिशत लेकिन न्यूजप्रिन्ट का इतना बड़ा आइसिस है। अगर वह इतने एडवर्टाइजमेंट अपने छाप रहे हैं तो अगर उन से कह सकते हैं कि वह मार्केट से व्हाइट पेपर ले कर या दूसरा कोई कागज ल कर उग पर छापें। न्यूजप्रिन्ट फॉर एडवर्टाइजमेंट बन्द करना चाहिए, ये दो तजवीजे मैं देना चाहता हूँ।

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN (Madras South). There was a time when this Resolution, now moved by Prof. Mukerjee, would have been willingly and joyfully accepted by the nation, but after watching the activities of this Government, people find a sinister motive behind this so-called move of diffusion the ownership of newspapers. I would like to bring to the notice of the Mover and the Minister that there are certain genuine fears. Not long ago, one of the superseded judges, Shri Hegde, told the nation that the primary aim of bringing in art. 31(6) was to take over newspapers. In this background, people find a sinister motive whether this kind of diffusion will be a step towards take-over of newspapers and making them the kept press of the Government of India, the very thing which is not liked by people like Shri Hanumanthaiya.

SHRI K. HANUMANTHAIYA (Bangalore): Take the extreme case of your argument about a kept press being accepted. If it is kept with Government, at least you have the opportunity to ask questions, comment, have a discussion. Will you have that opportunity under private management?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: I will come to your point later. But in the meanwhile, I want to make it very clear that we are against monopoly, whether it is in industry or in newspapers or in broadcasting. I do not hold a brief for the monopoly press. In fact, I am second to none in asserting that the nexus between big money and the press should be broken. My party is treated by the so-called monopoly press as the scheduled caste of Indian politics. So I do not hold a brief for this press.

Mr. Hanumanthaiya reminded us that the press is the fourth estate. It is a misleading name, because it implies that the press is an institution and should accordingly be protected. The modern press is an industry or a combination of industries, like any other industry, it should be controlled. There is no doubt about it. But it is a peculiar industry. It is a *sine quo non* of democracy, an essential pillar of it.

So I would advise Mr. Gujral to control the industrial side of the press, the business side of it, but do not touch the journalistic content of the press. This is my humble suggestion. The newspapers, big, medium or small, enjoy certain postal concessions, certain railway concessions. Moreover, these tycoons with their superior resources command circulations merely because of superior wastepaper value. As Mr. Chatterjee explained, 50 per cent of the newsprint is consumed by 9 or the 98 common ownership units. We know that foreign exchange is scarce. We help the big papers to import valuable newsprint. But for what purpose do they use it? They fill it up with advertisements. Eighty per cent of the space of some newspapers is filled with advertisements. Who is the giver of these? I think Government plays the bigger role. For some newspapers, more than 75 per cent of the advertisement revenue comes from the Government of India, the Governments of the States and public

undertakings only. Even the revenue from private advertisements comes indirectly from the people, because the advertisements are ultimately charged to the consumers. So it is also public money.

To control the business side of newspapers, there have been many suggestions. The last Finance Commission suggested that art 289(1)(f) should be used. What does it say—like you I have read the Constitution; but no so often. It says:

“Taxes on sale or purchase of newspapers and on advertisements published therein”.

There is a provision. The Centre can tax the sale or purchase of Newspapers or the advertisements published therein. But this provision has never been resorted to by the Government of India. The last Finance Commission in 1969 said “

“There is no doubt that advertisement revenue forms an important source of the income of the newspapers which in some cases may be as much as 50 to 75 per cent of the total income... Nevertheless we consider that this is a *prima facie* reasonable source from which additional revenue assignable to States could conveniently be raised.”

So far the Government has not resorted to this kind of taxation measure, probably because if the tax is levied the amount should go to the States.

Secondly, the Press Commission suggested the Price Page Schedule. It would have controlled the business side of the newspapers. Though it has been ruled out by the Supreme Court, many persons have suggested ways and means. We could bring in the Price Page Schedule and incorporate it in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution so that it could not be challenged in a court. But we did not resort to these measures. If we had done this, we would have clipped the wings of the monopoly press and the tycoons would have been cut to size.

Now the cry of the day is diffusion of the ownership of the press. What is diffusion? A statement in a newspaper says: "The existing corporate and inter-connected groups and individuals of the newspapers in circulation in excess of 15000 will be permitted to hold no more than 5 per cent shares. The remaining shares will be available for subscription to the journalists and other employees of the newspapers." This I think, is the proposed diffusion measure. Suppose all the workers and journalists in a paper become shareholders, do you think it will solve the problem? No. Already political parties are competing with each other to control trade unions of the press. The effect will be that political parties and tycoons will be vying with each other to get hold of the shareholders with the result that you will have a CPM press in West Bengal, a DMK press in Tamil Nadu, a Jan Sangh press in New Delhi. In West Bengal they may control the trade union, in Tamil Nadu we may control the trade union and so a situation may arise in Calcutta when the so-called shareholders, the workers, belonging to the party of Mr. Jyoti Bosu may refuse to compose an editorial written by shareholders who belong to the party of Mr. Sidhartha Shankar Ray. Such a situation may arise. Please explain why it will not arise. I have another example. Sir, I am a journalist myself and I need some more time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As to the merits of the speech, it is quite interesting, but I am bound by time.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: In Tamil Nadu there is a Tamil newspaper called 'Navamani'. It is perhaps the first newspaper in India started on a cooperative basis. All the workers there and working journalists are shareholders of the press. But what is happening today? It has become an arena of political storm. All the political parties are competing with each other to capture the union, capture the shareholders, with the result that it is in shambles. The editorials policy has not been deter-

mined. One day our people may give them pressure to write in support of the Government. The next day another party may give them pressure to write in support of them. It is in shambles. Do you want such a state of affairs in all the newspapers in India? I think the remedy is worse than the disease. What are your bonafides?

In a country where the rate of illiteracy is high, the spoken word has greater impact than the written word. But what is the position of All India Radio? It is a symbol of monopolistic abuse by the ruling party. So, I ask: Why don't you diffuse the ownership of All India Radio and make it a Corporation? Recently, I saw one cartoon in the *Hindustan Times* which had put the figure of Mr. Gujral and the caption written was: Today Gujral sneezed thrice. Such is the position. You should first diffuse the ownership, the pattern, of All India Radio and Television.

Then, Mr. Banerjee was narrating that the monopoly press was putting pressure on the Government. But the real situation is otherwise. There is a newspaper called *Kumudam*, the largest selling weekly in India. But what has happened? Somehow or other, you have made them to come to you with bended knees and converted it as an unofficial organ of your party because you are the giver of newsprint and you are the biggest giver of advertisement revenue.

What happened to Mr. Frank Moraes, the Doyen of Indian press? He was sent out of the Indian Express and, perhaps, out of India because he was not acceptable to the ruling party. Then Mr. G. S. Pandit happens to be the Editor of the Free Press Journal because he is acceptable to the ruling party....

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: You have a good chance also.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: There are certain genuine fears. I would like to advise the Minister to go in this matter.

I would like to bring to the notice of the Minister a speech made by him. On August 28, 1969, winding up the debate on the Press Council Amendment Bill, Mr. Gujral assured us that he would constitute a Second Press Commission. I want to quote his words. He said:

"The proposed Commission will go into the problems of press in its new dimensions."

I would like to tell the Minister that this kind of fact-finding committees will not solve the problem. This is a very important issue. I would like him to give an answer as to whether he is having a Second Press Commission in his mind about which he made a statement on August 28, 1969.

श्री मूलचन्द्र डाया (पाली) : सभापति जी, समाचारपत्रों को देश में नई कान्ति लानी है तो कुछ काम करना होगा। मैं बहुत थोड़े समय में एक प्रैस रिपोर्टर ने जो रिपोर्ट लिखी है, उसमें से कुछ उद्धृत करना चाहता हूँ—

"It has come to our notice that some of the persons, at present owning or controlling papers, have had no previous connection with or training in journalism. There are others who, while conducting newspapers, are primarily interested in other activities. There are some who are generally reputed to have indulged in anti-social activities."

यह जो संकल्प है, इसकी यह मांग है कि जो हमारे जर्नलिस्ट्स हैं, सम्पादन करने वाले हैं, जो देश में अपनी सच्ची बात रखना चाहते हैं, उनको बड़े-बड़े मकानों से निकाल कर बाहर लायें, उनको श्री हवा में, खुले आकाश में रख देना चाहिये। जो चारों तरफ से घिरे हुए हैं, जो अपनी स्वच्छन्द भावाज को नहीं रख सकते हैं, जो दौलत के घेराबे में फँसे हुए हैं, जिनको बड़े-बड़े मकानों में भ्रोनर्स के घेरा हुआ है, उनको मौका दिया जाय कि वे अपनी भावाज बाहर आकर रखें। भाज सारे जीवन का निर्णायक पैसा हो गया है। भाज जो मिला एक समाचारपत्र के

सम्पादक का होना चाहिए—देश के अन्दर एक नया इन्क्लाब पैदा करे, देश के सामने नई बात रखे और खुले तौर पर रखे, तब देश में परिवर्तन आ सकता है, इन्क्लाब पैदा हो सकता है। लेकिन जब समाचारपत्र आटुकार हो जाते हैं, केवल पैसा भ्रजन के लिये काम करते हैं, केवल दौलत कमाने के लिये काम करते हैं, भ्रोनर्स के कहने के अनुसार चलते हैं, बड़े-बड़े पूंजीपतियों की इच्छा के अनुसार चलते हैं और केवल वे खबरें छापते हैं जो उनके मालिक चाहते हैं तब कठिनाई पैदा होती है। इसीलिये सरकार ने यह निर्णय लिया कि हमको देश में इस प्रकार के समाचारपत्र चलाने हैं जिनमें समाचारपत्र चलाने वाले लोग अपनी स्वतन्त्र भावाज को, अपनी स्वच्छन्द भावाज को हिम्मत के साथ, ग्रहसास के साथ दुनिया के सामने रख सके इसीलिये—

"The organisation of the newspaper business today is such that the editor cannot act in the slightest independence of the management'. The organisation of politics today is such that he can hardly be led by other than political parties or groups. In either case, he stands committed to either Scylla or Charybdis—his whole freedom appears to be to hear and obey."

तो जर्नलिज्म का जो काम था वह एक ऊंचा काम था। गांधी जी हरिजन भ्रखबार निकालते थे, सम्पादन का काम ऊंचा काम होता है लेकिन जब बड़े-बड़े पूंजीपतियों के चक्कर में वह आ गए और यह समझने लगे कि हम बाहर नहीं निकल सकते हैं तो फिर हमने सोचा कि क्या किया जाय। हमने सोचा कि उनको बन्द मकान से बाहर खुली हवा में लाया जाय। चाहे कार्पोरेशन हो, चाहे को-ऑपरेटिव मूवमेंट चलाया जाय, किसी तरह से भी वह फ्री एयर में आ जायें और ताजा हवा में आकर अपने विचार व्यक्त करें। नवर्नमेंट कोई भी कन्ट्रोल नहीं करना चाहती बल्कि नवर्नमेंट चाहती है कि समाचारपत्र स्वतन्त्र रहें और गवर्नमेंट इस बात का निर्णय कर चुकी

[श्री मूलकाश शर्मा]

है कि जब तक देश में स्वतन्त्रता नहीं होगी हम आगे बढ़ नहीं सकते हैं। इसलिए मजनेमेंट का इरादा बिल्कुल ठीक है लेकिन कुछ समाचार-पत्र और जर्नलिस्ट्स देश में ऐसी बातें फैलाना चाहते हैं, अपनी व्यूज को पैदा करना चाहते हैं तो उनकी मोनोपली को खत्म करना होगा इसलिए—

"An editor-proprietor in the late thirties had blithely observed that he would shout with the larger majority. Today he has to emulate the weathercock when the west wind of drastic social change is interrupted off and on by the east wind of the vested interests to which he is allied by the circumstances of his business enterprise. Unless, therefore, the editor is himself a leader of public opinion and has complete freedom from employers' dictates...."

एडिटर लीडर की तरह काम करता है, खुद पब्लिक ओपीनियन कायम कर सकता है इसलिए उसे कुछ लोगों के पंजे से निकालना चाहते हैं। इसमें मिशन और जील की बात है। एक ही मतलब था कि मोनोपॉली जो है उसे कुछ लोगों के हाथ से लेकर बाहर लाना चाहते हैं।

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): My name is there. You cannot do that. You have to give representation to my party. You must give it. That is the procedure you must follow.... (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. Guha, it is very unfair that you should address the Chair in this tone and language. If you want to speak, all that you can do is to get up and make a submission. But you cannot dictate like that. (Interruptions) See the language in which I am talking. I expect the same civility from you. That is one thing. Secondly, it was the mandate of the

House that the Minister should be called at 5.30. It is in terms of that mandate that I am calling the Minister.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: On a point of order, Sir.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are a senior Member. I respect you immensely. But there is a certain procedure....

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: What is the procedure? I am on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Merely by saying, a point of order, you will not be able to browbeat me and get an opportunity. That is not fair. It was the mandate of the House that the Minister should be called at 5.30. Accordingly, I have called the Minister, I have called everyone according to the list, in the same order. If your name happens to be down below, it is not my fault. You must know that there are many other Members who have not been called. If you are called, please tell me the rationale why everyone else should not be called.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: You must give an opportunity to my party.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Guha, you must know that during the Private Members' Business, we do not go party-wise.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: We do not go Party-wise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I request you with folded hands to kindly abide by the procedure which has been laid down by the House and please do not make my task unnecessarily difficult. If I call you, it will be an injustice to others.

The Minister.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: No, Sir. On a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There will be no point of order. I shall not allow it. Under which rule you are raising it?

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: How can you overrule my point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: You cannot do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You want time to speak. That is the only point of order.

The whole thing is this. If I give you time, there is only one consideration.... (Interruptions) I would like you to hear me. I have always listened to your speeches with rapt attention.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: I do not seek any favour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no question of any favour. Please sit down. The rationale and the justice.... (Interruption) Please try to understand. Please do not be unreasonable. There are others who are wanting to speak.

Their claims are no better or no worse than yours for speaking. But since the House said.....

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: The whole proposition is wrong.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is a matter of opinion and I will not be browbeaten like this.... (Interruptions).

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: It is a question of convention.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some time or the other you should be told the mandate of the House and I am going to abide by the mandate of the House.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: I am on a point of order. I am not going to budge even an inch from my right. What you have told just now is against the convention that has been followed. The precedent that has been followed in this House is that whenever a resolution, whether it is from the official side or from the non-official side comes, the spokesmen of all the Opposition Parties get a right to speak one minute or two minutes, or three minutes but certainly they get a right. But you are propounding the theory that it is a question of priority of the list.

It is not a question of priority of the list. It is the question of priority of the Opposition Parties spokesmen getting a right to speak. The question of rationing of time is undoubtedly yours. That is the convention. I am not seeking any favour from you. I am not going to yield on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Between you and me, Mr. Guha. You are persisting. It is for me to go by certain basic canons of procedure, basic canons of justice.... (Interruptions). You have asserted your right to raise a point of order. I rule it out.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: It is my elementary right that he cannot deny.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to hold the whole House to ransom?

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: You did not say why you rule it out of order? (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: As a very exceptional matter, I allow you. But please conclude within two minutes.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: I should get five minutes at least.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You yourself said that I can ration the time.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: I request you to give me five minutes; this cannot be concluded in two minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is the mandate of the House. We have to conclude this debate within a particular time. That is the mandate of the House. That is not my wish but that is the mandate of the House.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: This is not the way to treat a national party in the House. We are a recognised national party in this House. I am not seeking any favour. I am exerting my right.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: Sir, if the House decides at one stage that the Minister might be called at 5-30

(Shri P. G. Mavalankar)

and if the House at a later stage finds that some more Members want to speak, let the House again decide the issue. Would you not listen to the House and find out what the wish of the House is? Some of us have given our names; of course, some of us were late; but all the same we have given our names. If you allow one person only to speak because he has been insisting and not allow the others, it would not be proper. Therefore, what I feel is that you may ascertain the wish of the House. The time of the debate may be extended if you think that is better. The Minister may reply after Members have spoken. But you can not allow one Member to speak and not allow others. My second point is this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The debate has to be concluded within a certain time; it can't go on *ad infinitum*. Mr. Samar Guha, please conclude quickly.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: If you give chance to party spokesman, why do you not give chance to independents? Why are independents demolished? I too as an independent have every right. Why should an independent's voice be crushed?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mavalankar please sit down. You have just sent a slip. Your name is not there,—not even in the list your name is there. Now, to assert your right like this is unfair. Mr. Guha.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: Have independents no place in this House? I want to ask this question: Have independents no place in this House? It is very unfair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You should have sent your name at the beginning of the debate itself. You could have got an opportunity then. You are sending your name at the eleventh hour and you shout at the Chair and this is not in keeping with your restraint, dignity and understanding.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: If you allow party spokesman, how is it that independents are not given time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not as party spokesman; I allowed him as senior Member.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: He was criticising the Chair there was no point of order.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: Undoubtedly the control of the monopoly and the big houses, the industrial houses, is a big constraint to the freedom of press. If we take an assessment of the democratic countries like U.K., Japan, France or America, we find there are similar constraints existing in bigger dimension in other countries also. In a degree such things are also found in our country. In totalitarian countries there is no freedom of press. At least in half of the world, this is the position. In totalitarian system press freedom is absolutely controlled. I am wholeheartedly in favour of democratisation of the functioning of news agencies and newspapers. But the threat to democracy and freedom of press and functioning of news-agency in our country to day is coming from the side of the ruling party as also from the side of the two big powers, super powers and they are pumping in all their propaganda materials into this country.

Sir, to-day, what is happening? In West Bengal, there are five major papers of which four have, excepting one, been turned into a Congress Bulletin. I remember one day I put a question to the Prime Minister as to how much expenditure had been incurred during her elections tour and what was the amount spent for the use of the plane and helicopter. The reply was also given. But, when I personally met the newsmen and asked them about its circulations they simply 'smiled'. They had sent the news. But, not a single line appeared in the paper. Recently, there was a discussion on the recruitment policy

of the Government with regard to the minorities—for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. We find that not even one paragraph appeared in papers all over the country. Sir, this was a discussion about the minority in regard to the recruitment policy of the Government. This was completely blacked out as the Minister resented such discussion.

Therefore, to me, it appears that certainly there should be freedom of the press and there should not be any curb by any agency on them. To-day, it is the ruling party which monopolies the real control of the mass media of newspapers news agencies etc. They are all controlled by the ruling party alone. Take for example the Embassy staff. Not thousands but lakhs of their periodicals are published in different languages in our country. I have also given the figures with regard to these two big powers whose periodicals in different languages are published in our country, and are circulated by the foreign embassies. Not only that. Their views and their news and articles are also being circulated. Millions of news pieces have also been circulated to all the news papers in India. Therefore, I feel that real threat to the freedom of the press is there; the threat to democracy and the threat to news agency is there. On the one hand there is threat from these two super powers and on the other these foreign agencies are trying to erode democratic freedom of our Press. It is strange that millions of periodicals are being published from India with a political bias. Their aim is to erode the freedom. Is it not an erosion of democratic freedom of the press? Is it not erosion of the sovereignty of our country?

I say it is absolutely necessary, for the democratic functioning of our country, to have freedom of the press. We have to go deep into the matter. I would say that freedom of the press freedom of the editorial, freedom of the news agency etc. must be assured not from the economic point of view but because we have accepted in this

country the policy that every means of production whether in industry or in trade will be nationalised. This I can understand. But, if you want to tackle the problem from the point of view of ensuring democratic freedom of the press, we have to see by what methods and by what means we can ensure the freedom to the editor. We have to see by which means we can ensure the freedom of the news editor, the freedom of the reporter as also the freedom of the newspapers. What is the use of talking of green signal or red signal when we go on circulating to news agencies by giving all kinds of benefits? Therefore I conclude that the real danger to press to-day is mostly from the side of the monopoly control of the press by ruling party on the one hand and erosion that is being caused by the stuff of the so called periodicals that are being published and circulated in millions in our country by these two super powers.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I must thank you and the House for this very enlightened debate. Last time and today, I think speaker after speaker made very very valuable contributions to this very vital area of our national life.

As a result of our freedom struggle, in which the mass medium, the newspaper, played a very big role, when we became independent, we were naturally very conscious of it. If you kindly have a look at the Preamble of the Constitution, it is enshrined itself one of the very important principles:

“LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief faith and worship”.

Amongst the various liberties, the people of India decided to give this ‘liberty of thought and expression’ priority over others. Even when they talked of belief, faith and worship, it came only after thought and expression. It did not end there. Let us turn to article 19. First it says:

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"All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression".

These are very fundamental things. The Constitution was passed by the Constituent Assembly sometime in 1949. Since then, I think one of the things which received the attention of the First Parliament of India was how to make this freedom of expression real. That was why in 1952, a Press Commission was set up. When I look at the Report of the Press Commission, my attention is riveted to the very beginning of it. In the first page, it is stated:

"..In 1951, the Prime Minister (then Jawaharlal Nehru) said that he was prepared to appoint a Committee or Commission, including representatives of the Press, to examine the state of the Press and its content. He elaborated the idea on the 1st June 1951 when he indicated that an inquiry covering the larger issue of the Press, such as had been carried out in the United Kingdom by the Royal Commission, might be productive of good for the Press, and the development of this very important aspect of public affairs".

Therefore, the Press Commission was set up. This was not something unusual, something new that we did for ourselves for the first time. Everywhere, in every society where freedom of press and freedom of expression is valued, such inquiries had been made, such commissions had been set up from time to time.

When the Commission was set up, it was not as if it comprised members who were very radical in their outlook and ideas, who thought they were going to bring about a revolution. If you have a look at the composition of the Commission—I would like to refresh your memory by reading the names of the members—it was chaired by Shri Justice G. S. Rajadhyaksha and its members were Shri Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar;

Acharya Narendra Deva, Dr. Jaiji Hussain, Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, Shri P. H. Patwardhan, Shri T. N. Singh, Shri Jaipal Singh, Shri J. Natarajan, Shri A. R. Bhat and Shri M. Chelapathi Rau.

These 11 members comprised the Commission and they came out with a very voluminous Report. One of the good things which has happened in the growth of our democracy is that the findings of this Commission have held sway in the thinking of this country because very worthwhile recommendations came out of it. Many recommendations made by the Commission were also implemented.

One of the thoughts which provoked new thinking was when the Commission said:

"A man's opinions are his own, but if he claims to purvey his opinions, the buyer is entitled to insist that it shall be untainted, unadulterated and undiluted. It is from this aspect that we are most concerned with the effect of ownership and the control that it exercises on the quality of service which it provides to the public".

This, I think, has been debated here and outside for a very long time. As I said in the beginning, not only here in India, but everywhere in the world today where the press has come to occupy a significant position in democratic life, the debate has been going on what is the role of the press and how the press should be run?

For many years we have heard that free communication movement has taken birth in many parts of the world. The essence of a free communication movement basically is that the press must be freed from those who have interests other than the press itself? Some societies permit complete laissez-faire. Some societies restrain them. But on one thing there is unanimity in the world. If a society has to guarantee freedom, then the society must be

certain and assured that those who run the press, are running it in the interests of a social purpose that the society has set for itself. I am nobody to say what the social purpose should be, and I believe that naturally this Parliament, that is the Lok Sabha and the other House would decide what the social purpose is from time to time. The elected representatives of the people from time to time decide what social objective the nation should have. They also decide from time to time what type of social changes we want to usher in. Ever since we became free, we have been thinking for ourselves. We have realised that modern life is very much depending on communication. It has been said here that since our literacy is low, perhaps our communication is ineffective. I think that is not true. In our society irrespective, of the era from which we pass, irrespective of the dark days that might have come on us, on one thing our value depended always, that is our entire cultural heritage depended, we have always felt that communication is very important. It did happen that when illiteracy came, when dark days came, we did not have that much of printed material. But then instead of that we developed a very rich oral tradition and that oral tradition kept our social and cultural values alive. So when the country became free, we felt that not only must we have an effective communication system but also that the communication system must have a purpose and must have a cultural value in it. We felt that the communication system must participate in the social process which the society has set for itself. Social change and social process, we all realise today, are inter-linked. We also felt that the mass media had a significant role to play in this. Historically it is wedded to the evolution of the printing press and with the evolution of the mechanised paper. It so happened that the papers and the press have remained the monopoly of some. Perhaps it was the continuation of the old

legacy when knowledge was the monopoly of some. In the days when the printing press was not discovered it was the monopoly of the church, by and large, in various shapes and forms in various countries. Therefore, knowledge and wisdom became synonymous and resided in a few. As man discovered the printing press and was able to print faster in a quantitative sense, it became possible for societies to evolve to a stage where not only could ideas be communicated but they could be taken away from some to many and for the first time democracy became possible after the printing press was evolved. It is interesting to find that democracy and the secular concept were closely co-related with the evolution of the printing press. It so happens that the instruments which help the growth of social thought and liberty at one time sometimes become the symbols of enslavement at a later phase. Though the printing press freed men from those who were monopolising knowledge it was itself monopolised by some because press and printing became expensive, technology in the last 2 or 3 centuries has developed at great speed and as technology developed, printing technology particularly, it became increasingly more expensive. Since it became increasingly more expensive, those who had more money got hold of it more effectively and today we feel that, in democratic societies, particularly a new trend has grown in the current century and big money monopolies are printing press.

18 00 hrs.

Once they monopolised the printing press, they thought they had a right to communicate whatever they wished. This is the basic contradiction.

In India and elsewhere we are facing this challenge. If in article 19 (1) we decided that we are going to give freedom of expression to our people, is it for the people and by the people, or is it for some to say whatever they like? If they were only interested in running the press it would have been easier for us, but unfortunately they had their

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own interests. Whatever their other interests may be, they have one basic vested interest, i. e. in maintaining the *status quo*.

The basic question to be asked is, can India afford to remain on the basis of *status quo*? If those who are running the press decide for themselves that *status quo* must be observed, can there be social change? If there is going to be this basic contradiction between social change and *status quo* can the means of communication be entrusted to those who have vested interest in *status quo*? This is a very wide issue. It has been debated here and elsewhere for a long time and I pride myself in saying that for the last three or four years, I have participated in it many times. To my friends here and outside my views on this issue are known. They have been stated a number of times. I am neither thinking in anger nor in terms of frustration nor in terms of power nor in terms of Government nor in terms of being a Minister. I am thinking as an Indian, I feel, as an Indian who believes in the freedom of expression, that communication has a vital role to play, that the means of communication have to be freed from a few so that many can be served, it is important that a new thinking in this aspect must come.

The Press Communication has done a considerable amount of thinking. Their report came in July 1954. For 20 years it has been with us. It is not as if we have been only treating it as a sacred document and have done nothing. My friends will be unfair if they think of this one recommendation and do not think of many others which have been implemented. This has not been implemented for many reasons. Jawaharlal Nehru's time, Lal Bahadur Shastri's time, Indira Gandhi's time—these three phases in Indian history have been periods when India has moved forward. One vital debate that is going on is, if you want to readjust the newspaper industry or the newspapers, it is very important that our

people must be convinced that we are motivated by only one basic factor: We want to preserve the freedom of expression and the freedom of thought. With this Government, not only today but always, freedom of the press has not been only a matter of policy. It has been a matter of commitment. We have always felt, and will continue to feel that freedom of the press is an essential, integral part of democratic life. We have felt that the right to dissent, both in the House and outside in writing and in speech, is inherent in a democratic structure and we are keen to preserve it. The issue will have to be seen from this angle: Does the present set-up encourage dissent and difference in thinking or does it not? This is the basic approach which should be kept in mind.

The Press Commission's submitted its report in 1954. In these 20 years, the situation has considerably changed. In 1954 we had 330 dailies in India, out of which 41 were in English and others in Indian languages. At the end of 1971, there were 821 dailies out of which 78 dailies were in English. Numerically, we have grown. The press has come to a stage of stability. Not only the number of newspapers and periodicals has grown but the number has grown in every language, including English.

Also, the total circulation of dailies in the country has increased from 25 lakhs in 1952-53 to 90.96 lakhs at the end of 1971. The number of dailies in Indian languages has increased from 289 in 1952-53 to 743 in 1971. The increase in circulation of Indian language newspapers during the period is from 18 lakhs to 68.77 lakhs.

Then, kindly keep one thing in mind. Sometimes, we think that definitions which the Press Commission enunciated at that time are still relevant. To an extent, they do; to an extent, they don't. For instance, the words used here are, big papers, medium papers and small papers. Small papers were defined as papers having a circulation upto 15,000; medium papers were those with a circulation of 15,000 to 50,000 and the larger ones were considered those having a circulation of

above 50,000. At that time, the pattern was different. Since the newspapers were few, there were only few papers which had a circulation above 50,000. I have given figures just now to show that in the last 20 years, numerically the number has grown and also the circulation of papers in the sense of largeness also has grown. There are more papers now which have a circulation of above 50,000.

Now, whatever we commonly call the monopoly press, it has grown. The number of papers outside the monopoly press has also grown. The biggest circulation today is of those papers which are not in the monopoly group. For instance, the *Anand Bazar Patrika* in Calcutta is the largest paper from circulation point of view. It is an Indian language paper. Then, for instance, Malayala *Manorama* and *Matrabhumi*, both in Malayalam and both outside the monopoly press, have grown.

Another qualitative change has also come in. Some years ago, Government had thought of some papers in terms of common ownership and they defined "common ownership" as a group which had two or more news interest newspapers at least one of which is a daily. Perhaps, at that time, only the monopoly papers, as we understand today, were coming under that definition. Today, the number of common ownership units has grown to 96 under the above definition. Now, these 96 groups do not belong to the industry as we commonly understand it. It also sometimes covers even those papers which from our point of view are very small papers. For instance, a group like *Thanthi* has grown up in Tamil Nadu which was nowhere in 1952. It is a very effective group now. Similarly, the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* group has grown up. It was not as effective then as it is now. Also *Anand Bazar Patrika*. Even from the point of view of common ownership, *National Herald* comes under that definition; *Patriot* comes under that definition. There are so many papers coming under that definition. So, the original concept of that definition to a great extent has changed. I am

saying this not to enunciate a policy or to give my views for good or for bad. I am only trying to say how much the scene has now changed.

Another important factor has also come in. Some years ago, Government advertisement budget of the Central Government used to be Rs. 25 lakhs and the total advertisement budget now, in 1972-73, of the D.A.V.P. is about Rs. 1.93 crores. From Rs. 25 lakhs it has come to Rs. 1.93 crores. Also please keep in mind that at that time -1952-53, the total advertisement budget of both public and the private sector put together was of the order of Rs. 6.2 crores. Now the budget estimates vary and the total advertisement budget at present is Rs. 60 crores and it may go upto Rs. 80 crores. Therefore, the entire picture has changed.

Sometimes, it is thought that the Government advertisement budget is so big that we can influence the newspapers. That is totally wrong. The Central Government's Rs. 1.93 crores has to be viewed in the background of the wide private budget that exists to the extent of Rs. 60 to Rs. 80 crores. Therefore, the scene has changed to a very great extent.

We have for a long time now ever since the Press Commission's report came in tried to evolve various methods for dealing with this problem. As I said, keeping in mind all the time the basic sensitivity of our people about the freedom of the Press and freedom of expression, many exercises had been undertaken. We have all during the passage of time agreed to one basic thing that it is in the interests of the freedom of the Press itself that it must be delinked from the industry. It is not as if new wisdom has dawned on Indians that we have come to this conclusion. This was realised and appreciated elsewhere in the world also. Even in the case of the *London Times* this was exactly what was done and when Lord Thompson took over, by a statement in Parliament it was laid down that Lord Thompson will not be allowed to influence the editorial side of the

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to influence the editorial side of the *London Times* and a trust was set up at that time to control and run the *London Times*. I can go on giving you examples from every country which believes in freedom of expression. Whether I talk of Germany, whether talk of France or I talk of U. K. or I talk of Italy or I talk even of Japan, in every country that you think of, with the passage of time, it has been realised that the Press is such a sacred institution that it cannot be left to the whims of a few who run it for their own selfish interests. That is why sometimes it has thought that it is good to set up trusts. Sometimes it was thought better to set up some sort of public chartered trusts where they can decide for themselves how to run it. But the idea basically is that the Press must be insulated not only from governmental influence but must be insulated also from those who have interests other than the freedom of the Press. That is why we in India whenever we carried out various exercises, came to against one difficulty or the other. Sometimes, the difficulty arose as to what area of the Press should be covered. Sometimes, it was felt that almost the entire Press scene should be covered. Sometimes, it was felt that almost the entire Press scene is that we should cover only those papers which are controlled by the big money who are outside the Press itself. I think, with the passage of time, a consensus has grown that we have to cover only papers which are controlled and run by big money. Once we came to that conclusion and the House will recall that from time to time this question was raised here and in the last two years particularly, some exercises were carried out and one exercise brought us to the concept of public trusteeship. The basic idea was that once you think of delinking the papers, then wherefrom the finances should come and who should set up the Board of management. The Government is very keen that it should not touch even from 20 yards the financing of the papers or the setting up of the Board because we believe

that the freedom of the Press should definitely be solid and complete and it must also look that the Government have nothing to do with it. Therefore, both in the content and experience, it is very important and that is why we do not want to go near it at all. In both the exercises the basic difficulty that came to our notice was that directly or indirectly the State comes in and money has to flow either from the Government or the governmental institutions. We are very keen that if finances are to be found, they must be found from those who are not either directly or indirectly linked with the Government, so that we cannot be accused, and we don't want to be accused that even indirectly we are interested in interfering with the freedom of the Press. As I said, we have fundamental faith in this. This led to many possible alternatives. As you would recall, the case went before the Supreme Court from time to time. My friends here raised the issue that the Press Commission recommended the Price Page Schedule. Why we did not enforce it? This House will recall that the law was made by this Parliament for prescribing Price Page Schedule. And, in the case known as the Sakal Paper case, this was struck down by the Supreme Court. My friend, Mr. Patil, will recall this because this is published from his own hometown, he would recall the details of the case. Similarly the case of newsprint came before the Supreme Court. They held that we have no business to have a price page schedule. Personally, I do not agree with some of the observations which the Supreme Court have made. I would like to place before the House one or two observations of the Supreme Court. In the newsprint case they observed:

"The Bank Nationalisation case (supra) has established the view that the fundamental rights of shareholders as citizens are not lost when they associate to form a company. When their fundamental rights as shareholders are impaired by State action their rights as shareholders are protected. The reason

is that the shareholders' rights are equally and necessarily affected if the rights of the company are affected".

This was an enunciation which does not tally with our philosophy, with our way of thinking at all.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer to another observation of the Supreme Court observed in the same case:

"This freedom is violated by placing restraints upon it or by placing restraints upon something which is an essential part of that freedom. A restraint on the number of pages, a restraint on circulation and a restraint on advertisements would affect the fundamental rights under Art. 19 (1) (a) on the aspects of propagation, publication and circulation."

This judgment naturally has to be kept in mind when we are thinking of devising any measure which can be brought before the House.

A very long judgement emerged only a few months ago from the supreme Court on the Twenty fourth and Twentyfifth Amendments of the Constitution I do not want to take your time to read out the judgment but you would recall that one of the essential principles laid down in the judgment was this, that the essential features, the basic features, are not to be changed. This was the basic philosophy of the judgment as such. I am told by Law Ministry that this is a very long judgment covering about 1700 pages and it has naturally taken some time to study, it; they have assured me that they will complete their studies soon and it will be possible for us to go further in the matter.

There is one thing which I must reiterate once again and it is this. In our set up of things the Supreme Court occupies a position which we all respect; we have no intention

whatsoever to come into conflict with the judiciary because we do feel that when we are thinking in terms of freedom of the Press we must also at the same time reiterate and say that we equally believe in the Supreme Court, the set up for dispensation of justice, as envisaged in the Constitution. Whenever we evolve a measure, we have to keep this basic concept in mind and then only we can possibly come to any conclusion.

18.19 hrs.

[SHRI S. A. KADER in the Chair]

In spite of what my friends have said, I would like to reiterate this that we should be in a position to evolve a set up which has three or four basic ingredients.

- (1) It must preserve the freedom of the press from the Government. An attempt should be made to preserve it from the industrial interests;
- (2) we must keep in mind that money does not flow into the press in *benamis*—either *benamis* by political parties or *benamis* of the owners or *benamis*—God forbid that stage may not come by some foreign powers.

These things have to be basically safeguarded. Also at the same time, we have to keep in mind the fact that the set-up is viable so that the papers do not sink after delinking. We are keen that the institution should not suffer. That is why we are now going into the whole thing. I know Prof. Mukerjee is impatient and I have always felt that he has been impatient since my school days.

I am equally impatient. But, the limitations under which I am working should also be appreciated. I think the House has made it very clear that we are all basically committed to an approach almost unanimously towards which we are going and irrespective of what my friend Shri

[Shri I. K. Gujral]

Piloo Mody and other might have said. By and large, the House feels that in the interest of the Constitution, the press must become a free instrument of communication undiluted and influenced by big money. I can assure my hon. friend, Shri Mukherjee that if he will kindly have some more patience and not insist on his Resolution, I hope, I shall be able to bring forth soon a measure which will be an effective method of de-linking the papers from the big money. We are keen that our press must grow; we are keen that our press must be an effective link with our people; we are keen that our press must become a communication means for our growth, for our social change and for building a new India to which we are all wedded.

SHRI H. N. MUKHERJEE (Calcutta—North-East): Mr Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to the House for the very wide support which my Resolution has been accorded. As my friend, the Minister has said, there have been only very few voices of discord. But, I am afraid, I am not able to respond to the advice of my hon. friend, the Minister, because, I am dissatisfied with the content of his reply. I have a feeling that perhaps because of a guilty conscience, in this matter, he spoke in a somewhat philosophical manner most of the time. He ended up again with the generalities to which we have been accustomed for so long. I am afraid this country cannot wait much longer.

Sir, as my hon. friend, the Minister himself has said, this subject is a twenty-years old matter and if there are certain difficulties, they can certainly be thrashed out. If, in the meantime, Government has not done its home work, Government can come forward in Parliament and the matter can be thrashed out by the Committees of Parliament so that the difficulties that remain can be resolved. But, what we find, Government is doing, is that it is making brave declamations from time to time. Last

time, I quoted how so many Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State etc., went on trying to win praise and plaudits by attacking monopoly in vehement terms and a promise was made to the country that the legislation was ready in draft, and yet, nothing very much has been done about it.

My friend, the Minister, referred to a certain number of points, one among which was that after all, there has been some improvement in the press situation since 1954. It may be that many more Indian language newspapers are coming out. Of course, it is true that the circulation of the press in its totality has risen a great deal, but monopoly has also increased. While in 1963-66, the seven great newspapers combined consumed about 44,000 tonnes of newsprint, which went up to nearly 40 per cent of the imported newsprint and 33 per cent of NEPA newsprint, in 1969-70, the share of the seven newspaper groups went up from 44,000 tonnes to 84,565 tonnes. Nine of the 65 common ownership units which operate in Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Calcutta command 71.5 per cent of the total circulation. Two newspapers, *Anand Bazar Patrika* and *Jugantar*, control 97 per cent of the total circulation of the Bengali press, just as Goenka has acquired a commanding position in the Telugu press.

These examples can be multiplied. But Shri Gujral had the hardihood even to say that many of these newspapers, the mammoth newspaper organisations, are very faultless, innocent little customers. He mentioned about the *Malayala Manorama*, about which I do not know very much. He mentioned *Anand Bazar*. If you say the *Anand Bazar Patrika* is not a monopoly, is not linked with monopoly interests, it is saying something which you can tell to the marines, but not in the Houses of Parliament. Here is a paper whose proprietors have been hauled up even here in Parliament because of CBI investigations in regard to surreptitious sale of newsprint which they conducted; here is a

paper whose bosses are connected with industry, one of them the Chairman of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and that sort of thing. There are so many other links which I have no time to elaborate at this particular point of time.

My friend over there had said very rightly how *Jugantar* and *Amrit Bazar Patrika* also come in this group, how these papers have Ministers of Government in the families which run the papers, use them for their own purposes, how these things are conducted in a fashion which goes against all principles of decency, entirely out of accord with those traditions of patriotic journalism which has become a part, so to speak, of the legacy of this country's civilisation.

But these pirates who make money through newsprint, through surreptitious sale of newsprint, who get loans from our banks by all means of fraudulent transaction for which, for example, the *Indian Express* busybodies are being hauled up before courts of law, these people have said goodbye to all traditions of decent, patriotic journalism in this country, and in so far as it can, Government is not going to take any drastic steps whatever. This is most amazing.

I should think that Government should come forward and also Parliament should be supplied with all the facts so that the confusions there are in the minds of many well-meaning persons can be cleared up.

I have no time to deal with the provisions to which reference was made by my friend, Shri Maran. I can disregard the charming infantilism of Shri Piloo Mody or the interlude which was brought about by Shri Samar Guha's forcible intervention into the debate. But we should be given all the facts in regard to what the position is. What are the technical difficulties? All the technical difficulties surely can be removed by the application of the mind of Parliament

to this issue. On the matter of principle, our mind is made up. In the matter of implementation of that principle, we have to deal with certain difficulties and obstacles which the Minister props up at this present moment. These difficulties can be discussed at the parliamentary level. He can bring up legislation. I would have been very happy if he had said very definitely that—

“Because this session is already well advanced, early in the next session—I make a definite commitment—I shall introduce a Bill and that Bill if necessary”—

I would not like it—

“if it becomes necessary, can go to a Select Committee of Parliament and there we can thrash out this whole matter”.

If I get this sort of assurance, I could understand it, but the assurance I get is no assurance at all.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry is important not only because of the amount of work it has to undertake, but also because it is the Prime Minister's particular pigeon. When Mr. Gujral speaks, he speaks not for himself. I am unhappy when some people single him out for attack or for praise. It is the Prime Minister and her Government's policy which is on the anvil and I can see that they have made up their minds not to disturb the monopoly set-up there is today in the newspaper industry. If they had made up their minds to strike at the root of this indecency which passes for the control of papers in the newspaper industry in this country, they would have done something. After all the Minister read out the names of the members of the Press Commission, very respectable people, reputable people. They are not foam-at-the-mouth communists. They do not want to overturn the social order. They had thought of the implications and the connotations of the idea of diffusion of ownership, delinking the press from big money, some kind of a co-operative organisation mainly of

[Shri H. N. Mukherjee]

journalists and workers in the press and decent individual citizens in this country to come together in order to bring about dissemination of opinion and also propagation of views in this country on a principled basis. That is the only foundation of genuine democratic existence. But they are not implementing it.

I feel that Government's links with big money are so strong that Government cannot make up its mind even about a matter on which they have proclaimed their commitment more than a couple of years ago through Ministers, who announced that the draft of the legislation was ready. In regard to the Price Page Schedule for example, the constitutional difficulty came up with the Supreme Court judgement. That sort of difficulty can be removed by the mechanism which the Parliament of India has got at its disposal. But Government keeps mum about it. There are so many things, but it is late and I need not hammer the point which somehow would not penetrate the skulls of the Government of my country at the present moment. I happened only this morning to come across what Jawaharlal Nehru once wrote, and he quoted in his autobiography an American socialist who is supposed to have said: "Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich by promising to protect each from the other". You get votes from the poor; you get campaign funds from the rich; you tell the poor that you are protecting them from the rich and you tell the rich that you are protecting them from the poor! That is exactly what is going on, and if Government imagines that because they have got a massive mandate they can carry on in this way, it is wrong.

I am also reminded of something which happened in the Soviet Union, because even there many difficulties arose from time to time. Stalin himself once related it in his speech; he wanted to find out about the progress of sowing in a collective from area of that country. When the comrades

concerned came to him he asked them: "How about the sowing, comrades?" They replied "Comrade Stalin, we have mobilised ourselves" Stalin asked: "What about the sowing?" They replied: "We have clarified all perspectives, we hold ourselves in readiness." Stalin asked "That is all very good, but how about the sowing?" Then the answer was: "Comrade Stalin, we are sorry we have not yet begun the sowing."

Our Minister, Gujral, whom I have known for umpteen years as a young lad, now a big wig and a ministerial personality, goes on making statements in Parliament and makes a philosophical speech that perspectives are clear and mobilisation of the resources inside and outside is somehow being done and all that.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: May I interrupt him for a moment? I have said that I have always respected Mr. Mukerjee not only as friend but as a guru and whatever I have said, I should say, I have learnt a lot from him.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE: His words disarm me. But I can hardly deviate from the stand which I have already taken, namely, that in spite of his personal weakness for me, I cannot tolerate this idea that the Government of this country can play ducks and drakes so to speak with the promises it gives to the country. Performance has not followed the promise. Implementation of a commitment has not taken place. If the Minister had only given me an assurance which even at this late stage he can, that he would bring forward early in the next session a Bill which if necessary would go to the Select Committee, where all the hurdles can be smoothed up, I shall be ready to withdraw the resolution. Otherwise I shall be constrained to ask the House to vote on my resolution. I shall ask my colleagues in this House to vote for the principle of the resolution because I am calling upon the Government to do it immediately without delay.

~~Declaration of Lok Sabha as Constituent Assembly (Res.)~~

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: What has happened to your observation on 28th August 1969 that a second Press Commission would be set up?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: I did say that, but I hope he appreciates that I was not Information Minister for long after that. I have come back after a long time. In the meantime, a fact-finding committee has been set up. One of the things which a Press Commission does is to enquire into the various aspects of newspapers. We feel that when the fact-finding committee completes its work and submits its report, we have some new light on the financial and other aspects of various newspapers. That is why we have given to this fact-finding committee the powers under the Commission of Inquiry Act, so that all the data can be collected. I am sure when the report of the fact-finding committee comes, it will cover all the aspects he has in mind.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will put Shri Daga's amendment to the House.

The amendment was put and negatived.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now put the main resolution to the vote of the House. The questions is:

"That this House calls upon the Government to adopt immediate measures for delinking and democratically diffusing the ownership of newspapers and news agencies in the country."

The motion was negatived.

18.39 hours.

RESOLUTION RE: DECLARATION OF PRESENT LOK SABHA AS CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

श्री विभूति मिश्र (मोतिहारी) :
सभापति महोदय, मैं निम्नलिखित प्रस्ताव प्रस्तुत करता हूँ :

"इस सभा की गय है कि वर्तमान लोकसभा को सविधान सभा घोषित किया जाये और देश के लिए तुरन्त एक नया सविधान बनाया जाये।"

इस सम्बन्ध में मुझे यह कहना है

MR. CHAIRMAN: He may continue on the next day.

18.40 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, August 20, 1973; Sravana 29, 1995 (Saka)