

shape. But we must remember in this connection that the first thing is that this is a social legislation, and in any kind of social legislation problems change, new problems arise and demand new solutions; and it is certainly not the wiser way to deal with legislation of this kind by waiting and holding up progress, saying that a more consolidated measure can be brought in. Besides, there is another disadvantage. In an effort to bring about consolidation, we are also in danger of bringing in rigidity and unchangeability in our outlook. It is not a very desirable feature of the situation. Sometimes I am tempted to feel proud that we in this country are developing our labour movement along independent lines. We have been trying to solve our problems in our own way and based on policies in keeping with the genius of the people. We have never allowed ourselves to forget that in this kind of legislation of labour matters we have to deal with people who have an adult franchise. Every man has a vote, and that fact has been kept constantly in mind in every effort we make.

Mahatma Gandhi had seen the necessity and the wisdom of taking interest very early in the labour movement and the welfare of the workers. And, as we all know, Nandaji has spent a whole life-time in building up the labour movement, through years. As a result of these efforts we have been able to evolve a labour movement which is non-political and non-partisan. We have been able to give a good answer to the other parties, with this new form of labour movement, the other bodies who have always had or have mostly had a communist-dominated union.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member's time is up.

17 hrs.

Shri V. B. Gandhi: Shall I continue?

Mr. Chairman: If he wants to conclude in a minute or two, I have no objection.

Some hon. Members: Let him continue tomorrow.

Shri V. B. Gandhi: May I have some time tomorrow? I would require some more time.

Mr. Chairman: He would like to continue on the 3rd?

Shri V. B. Gandhi: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: That is all right.

COMMITTEE ON ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

TENTH REPORT

Shri Khadilkar (Khed): Madam, I beg to present the Tenth Report of the Committee on Absence of Members from the sittings of the House.

17.01 hrs.

PROPOSALS FOR STREAMLINING OF WORK OF I. & B. MINISTRY*

Mr. Chairman: Now, the House shall take up the half-an-hour discussion. Shri Nath Pai.

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting in the statement which she made had, among other things, this to say to the question which was asked of her about the working of the Ministry which she has been currently heading. She said:—

“The problem (basically) before us is..... of so revitalising the entire Ministry as to enable its different organisations not only to keep more closely in touch

*Half-an-Hour Discussion.

[Shri Nath Pai]

with the demands of the people, but also to be more alive to the newest ideas and methods and to the needs of our changing times.

While various shortcomings and deficiencies have been pointed out in Parliament as well as outside in the working of almost all the organisations of this Ministry, criticism in the main has been concentrated on the functioning of A.I.R. and its programmes. The Ministry is grateful for the helpful suggestions that have been made."

It was a fortnight statement, a courageous statement, a candid statement and the Minister deserves congratulations for having made a departure from the usual stand that Ministers take whenever their departments are under fire, under criticism. Rather than strike the posture that nothing whatever is wrong with her department and her Ministry except the fermented imagination of critics, she boldly accepted that there is much that is wrong, that needs to be looked into. Further, she said that she would be glad if she is helped in the process of putting this very vital organ of the Government of India into order.

I was a little encouraged in my effort to raise this because for a very long period of time one had been reading in practically every important journal in the country criticism, both signed and unsigned, and some of our best columnists were expressing their anxiety about the way the AIR had been functioning over a period of time.

My second encouragement came from the fact that when I raised this question, senior leaders of the ruling party like my distinguished friend, Shri Hanumanthaiya, Shri Harish Chandra Mathur and many others,

very readily agreed that we should try to raise such a discussion. I do not know if you do not call him senior or you are embarrassed by the fact that he signed this for this discussion. The Deputy Chief Whip is laughing and therefore I raised it.

In the very beginning I should like to say that during the very short time at my disposal I should like to concentrate my criticism on some salient aspects which show that there is much that we can do to improve the standards of the service the All India Radio has been giving to the country.

First and foremost, I do not know if it has been properly realised by those who run the All India Radio what a unique, mighty, powerful instrument it is of fostering what we have all been trying to achieve but not succeeding, what has been eluding the fingers of all of us, namely, national integration, the sense of unity, raising the cultural standards of our people, creating a new awakening and even to a great extent promoting education. There is no medium so important, so vital, as this that is available to a modern society. And yet when one looks at the long sad chapter beginning with 1927 to 1964, one is alarmed at the many opportunities that have been so miserably lost. I do not know what part the All India Radio plays in our life. The B.B.C. in Britain, for its cultural life, intellectual life and political life, is the main stream of life. How apart, how different, how remote, is the All India Radio from our life. It in no way reflects our life; it in no way shapes our life, moulds our life; it plays no part in our life and we have no part in the life of our All India Radio. It is called AIR—it is truly in the air most of the time; it has not after all these 45 years been able to strike roots in the soil of this country. It remains, supremely in the air. In a country like ours, where literacy is so limited, where the total circulation

of newspapers is 5½ million, we can reach the remotest corner of our country, we can meet and come in contact with the dumbest of our fellow countrymen through the medium of the radio, give him the message of new India, bring him nearer to this capital which is far away from the Garo hills, from the remote parts of Andhra desh or Coorg hills where the people live. This was the one instrument which an imaginative mind could have grasped with both hands and tried to use it as a new power that has been made available to us by science and technology. Unfortunately, that has not been so.

Madam, I was a bit distressed when I came here and a friend asked me whether the criticism has been inspired by this or that. I have never condescended in my life in espousing a cause at the behest of anybody unless I deeply feel that it is a cause which needs to be raised on the highest forum of this country. But I would also like to say that when I am convinced, neither maligning campaign nor this kind of intimidation of which I got a taste when I came here, will deter me from raising my voice in the highest forum of our country, my Parliament.

Here is one of our noted journalists, Mr. George Varghese who belongs to no party and who is regarded as an objective critic of all that is happening in our country. This is what he has to say about the way the All India Radio functions:

"The radio immediately, probably, is the best hope but not All India Radio in its present form. A.I.R. is as dull and bureaucratised as the post office....".

I think, post offices sometimes are a bit more alive and responsive to our people than generally what the A.I.R. is. It is in sheer boredom that I turn to All India Radio and before I listen to it for five minutes, unless there are some good Hindi comments which

normally are delivered in melodious voice and very competently—I like to improve my Hindi and it brings to me the charm, the beauty and the majesty of Hindi—when I listen my own language in which the bulletin is read out, I get simply shocked and I get pain in my neck when I see the artificial, the theatrical way in which the Marathi language, the language of Jnaneshwar is used. I can never listen to it. Accidentally, while trying to get something better there, sometimes I get trapped into listening of that bulletin. And what an outrage of my language! I think of those whose mother-tongue is Marathi. The Hindi people are more lucky. They have chosen able people and I think they do the job ably. I like most of that though I cannot competently say about all. I do not regard myself as competent to pass criticism about that.

Then, he further says:

"In this, therefore, neither talent nor imagination is lacking but they are not given any but the most limited outlet. Initiative is severely restricted by the very structure and concept of All India Radio as a department of the Government, an official mouth-piece, non-controversial except when crudely propagandist and unconcerned with listeners response and subject to constant interference and pressures from people who know nothing about broadcasting."

When I see George Varghese or Frank Moris or Chanchal Sarkar or people of that calibre and standard and objectivity raising their voice, it becomes necessary that we do not deceive ourselves that since an assurance has come from the Minister, all is right—I do not mean the present Minister, but her worthy predecessors, a distinguished line of Ministers who preceded her and who repeatedly assured that we are doing well. What is the comparison, and what is

[Shri Nath Pai]

the standard that we should have. As I said, here was a certain vital instrument which could have been turned to great use during the transitional period of our life, but every opportunity you give is missed.

I shall take one example. There was this great tragedy which befell our country, namely the Chinese invasion. It was a tragedy, and it was a challenge. How did AIR rise to the occasion? Six days after the invasion, the first challenge to India's sovereignty and freedom, here was the main instrument of communication, of information, for awakening the people and raising their morale and welding them into one team to fight this monstrous challenge to our survival and existence, coming out with a feature. Of course, news was given. Somebody said during those days that, from journals to Generals, if anyone who wanted to know what was happening in NEFA or Ladakh, he had only to turn to Radio Peking. What a sad commentary on the working of AIR?

I know, of course, that they had a handicap, and I would not hold the AIR responsible for what is not its field of activity. The briefing was done, I am told, by the Defence Ministry at 6 P.M., and from 6 P.M. till the next morning six o'clock, for the agonised nation, every moment wanting to know how the jawans were faring, what was happening to holding the line, whether it was being stabilised, whether the enemy was coming forward ruthlessly and so on, there was no guidance, no information, and no piece of news from AIR. Here was a challenge to our existence, but this was how the main instrument of Government served the country.

I remember how it can quickly degenerate from being an independent body which it is supposed to be to being a mouth-piece of the ruling party. During the strike of 1960, Dr. Keskar was the then presiding deity of the AIR. We, who were the victims of the propaganda thought 'Was it the gentle spirit of Dr. Keskar, in

every way, a gentleman, or some notorious doctor who had presided on the radio of another country?', for during the strike, so monstrous was the distortion, completely ignoring all tenets that it was to serve the people and not any party, and it did everything to distort and discredit the motives behind the strike and mislead the public opinion.

17.13 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

Then came another test of the AIR's function, its efficiency and its imagination, and the kind of calibre which it throws into action when it is called upon to serve the people. That was on the 27th May, when a shocked nation learnt of the demise of free India's first Prime Minister. It is a sordid affair. There is no major national journal which has not taken note of it. I am not interested in going into the gruesome details of it, because it is a sad chapter. But better service could have been rendered, because it was not only a passing but at the same time we were called upon to create a new India immediately; when there was the shadow of death hanging, there was the dawn of a new India to be welcomed, because India had to continue; a Jawaharlal Nehru is not born every day nor does he die every day. But how was the nation served on this occasion?

All that you heard on AIR for long hours, when with tears in their eyes and a choke in their hearts, people were glued to their sets throughout the country, was only some doleful music, and all the time an announcement that the President was going to speak. Within an hour and a half of the assassination of the Father of the Nation, Sardar Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were giving comfort to the nation and calling upon the nation to stand united. That was an assassination, and the whole nation was taken by surprise. I am not a critic, and I shall give due credit where credit is due. This happened

on the occasion of Gandhiji's assassination. But here you find that from 1.55 P.M. till 8.30 P.M., the nation was only told that the President was going to speak immediately, but for unknown reasons he did not speak till 8.30 P.M. The reason was simple. Not even the most elementary precautions had been taken. Since we knew that this catastrophe was one day or the other going to come, AIR ought to have been prepared, because beloved as Jawaharlal Nehru was, he was mortal, and its impact on the people's mind ought to have been anticipated and precautionary measures taken to foresee what would be the impact, if things were not properly relayed in an hour like that. But nothing happened. The President came on the air at 8.30 A.M. when even something worse happened. The AIR, the one instrument for stabilising the morale of the people and for enabling them to see a new leaf, and asking them to hold steadfast in spite of their mourning and sorrow, went off the air at 3.30 P.M. and was off the air for two long hours. Off the air for two long hours! We thought that this was in respect, for which it ought to have gone off the air for two long minutes. But it went off for two hours. The statement that has been made in reply to the question that it was not two hours but half an hour is totally wrong. Is this the way of functioning? Is this the way of rising to the occasion?

The next day's covering—was it any kind of a credit to All India Radio? Apart from the gross inaccuracies in describing the funeral procession what did we find? A Funeral procession is a sad thing. The only way of standing before death is, as our forefathers have told us, standing in all simple dignity before death—no sentimentality, no exaggeration, no drama before the face of death.

“जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृतर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च”

But here was something that seemed

different, almost vulgarising the death of the greatest Indian after Gandhiji.

Shri Thirumala Rao (Kakinada): All these points have been replied to on the floor of the House. What is the purpose of this eloquence then?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: His time is up.

Shri Nath Pai: I do not know what is annoying Shri Thirumala Rao. It has not been replied. I am having this before me. It has not been replied to. He might have been satisfied. I have every right to ask for satisfaction why it was done in that way. Why Indians were referred to as 'swarms of flies'. He may be proud that Indians were called 'swarms of flies' on the All India Radio. I am not. I am ashamed, and I think Jawaharlal would have been embarrassed to know that the Indians who came to pour their devotion on him were referred to as 'swarms of flies'.

May I know what are the standards in dealing with the 13,000 unfortunate staff artists? How are appointments made? We have 13,000 staff artists; 2,000 of them staff artists, the others casual. Is there any method adopted? The late Shri Lal, when he was Secretary of this Ministry, had laid down a method. We have some very good staff artists. I feel proud of the way some of them who announce our bulletins do the job. But after 13 years what security of office have they got? They have to depend upon the mercy of one official or another for the extension of their tenure of office. Young artists have to go. What is their right?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: This is a half-hour discussion. He should wind up.

Shri Nath Pai: I know, It is customary for the Member who raises it to take such time. I will conclude in another two minutes.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There are other Members who have given notice

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

for asking questions. The Minister has then to reply.

Shri Nath Pai: I will take two minutes to formulate these questions and then it will be possible for the Minister to reply.

May I know if there is any standard about audition? Formerly there used to be an independent committee about those who read the bulletins? This independent committee has been dismissed. I do not know why. A departmental committee is there now. Is this fair, that in a matter like audition we depend exclusively upon the departmental committee?

The same about appointments. Appointments are left to the discretion of a few individuals. I am not against any particular individual. I am interested in having my All India Radio as a serviceable instrument of the people of India, that it is used to further those national ends to which made an earlier reference.

I would also ask whether the Minister thinks that these allegations are true. I feel distressed to repeat them, which I asked in my question whether the All India Radio, as one journal says here, is a 'federation of cliques, groups and intrigues.' The radio and television have to be carried in a great delicacy and with imagination, without any kind of spirit but the spirit of camaraderie and teamwork. If it is not there, it cannot work.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He should conclude.

Shri Nath Pai: I would ask whether in the light of this—I should have liked to say many more things—the Minister will carry out her promise, and the hopes which she has held out—I hope she does not take the facile attitude that the hon. Member who thought it his duty to interrupt me

took; she herself said that much is wrong and it needs to be looked into—whether in the light of all this, this inquiry will not be a departmental inquiry, it will not be the usual white-wash, but she, in pursuance of her promise which she made that new horizons exist, much can be done in the limits, will really try to convert All India Radio into an instrument for forging a new nation.

Shri Vidyacharan Shukla (Mahasamund): May I put a question?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Three people have already given previous intimation.

Shri Vidyacharan Shukla: I have also sent my notice.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Barackpore): Our names we have sent. I hope you have received.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have got only three names. Shrimati Savitri Nigam, Shri Prakash Vir Shastri, Shri D. C. Sharma.

Shri Hanumanthaiya (Bangalore City): We have signed.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There are 15 chits.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: No. The original motion is signed by us.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have got 15 chits after the discussion began.

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): I sent before that.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will allow about half a dozen Members, not more than that. Otherwise, it ceases to be a half-hour discussion.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What can we do?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I am sorry. We have to stick to the rules.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: But we must be allowed to put a question.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: What about the people who have signed the original motion? You are reading names sent subsequently.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will call one by one. I will give ten minutes for questions, as many as possible.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Jalore): Let us first clear the position. We do not want any extra privilege to ask a question. The question is that certain Members associated themselves in asking for this discussion. The names of the Members who have asked for it are there. Those people have got to be called first, and then those who have given further notice under the rules are to be called.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will read the rule:

"There shall be no formal motion before the House nor voting. The member who has given notice may make a short statement and the Minister concerned shall reply shortly."

Here, the Member who has given notice is S^ri Nath Pai, and others have supported him. They may not get a chance to ask questions. Any Member who has previously intimated the Speaker under rule 55(5) may be permitted to ask a question for the purpose of further elucidation.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: Even according to your interpretation.... (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: They have signed the notices. That will only support the motion for discussion.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: No.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will give a chance to six or eight persons, but I cannot give a chance to all, because then it will cease to be a half-hour discussion.

Shri Hem Barua: I sent in my name. I cannot understand how the notice sent to you can be missing in the way. We gave it.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will go on till 5.30 with questions.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam (Banda): I would like to know two things from the hon. Minister.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Only one question.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: First of all, I would like to have a little clarification about this streamlining business.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: What is your question? Please put your question.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: I am going to put the question. I want to know what the hon. Minister means by streamlining. Does she mean that the AIR should be developed according to the needs of the times, according to changing circumstances and changing times, or does she mean that there is something definitely wrong which should be rectified. First of all, I would like to know this.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Only one question. I am not allowing a second.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: This is another part of the question.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: No.

श्री प्रकशवीर शास्त्री (विजनीर) :
"उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आप के द्वारा सूचना एवं प्रसारण मन्त्री महोदय से एक बात जानना चाहता हूँ, इसी प्रसंग में जैसा कि श्री श्री नाथ पाई ने अपने भाषण में कहा कि लगभग सारे भारत में 13,000 स्टाफ़ आर्टिस्ट्स इस प्रकार के हैं जिनको नौकरी करते करते 13 साल व्यतीत हो गये लेकिन अभी तक उनको अपने जीवन के सम्बन्ध में कोई स्थायित्व इस विभाग की ओर से नहीं दिया गया है तो क्या यह आपके विभाग की ओर से उनके सम्बन्ध में

[श्री प्रकाशवीर शास्त्री]

कोई अनुकूल निर्णय नहीं लिया गया अथवा उनको घोर से कोई अनुकूल रिपोर्ट नहीं आई ? या फिर मन्त्री स्तर पर इस सम्बन्ध में कोई निर्णय नहीं लिया गया है ? आखिर क्या कठिनाई है जो अब तक 13,000 लोगों का भाग्य बीच में ही अटका हुआ है ।

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): May I know if the statement made by Mr. Nath Pai with regard to the reporting of the tragic loss to the nation in the death of our late Prime Minister is correct? I want a categorical statement from the Minister whether the allegations he has made are correct or not and how the All India Radio reported this very tragic thing which happened to our nation.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: May I know whether this is one department in the Government where the Director-General is supreme and he can administratively appoint people upto salaries of Rs. 1200 without reference to the UPSC and he is the boss of a highly technical department like the News Services Division or the External Services Division, whether and if it is a fact that these charges of nepotism and incompetence against the Director General have really led to deterioration in the work of the AIR

Shri Hem Barua: This House has been suggesting times without number that the All India Radio be converted into a full-fledged autonomous corporation on the lines of the BBC. May I know whether Government have given any thought in that direction?

Dr. L. M. Singhvi (Jodhpur): We would like to know whether there are any interim measures before the full fledged report of the commission to be appointed is available and whether the idea of appointing a commission for a full-fledged enquiry into the working of this Ministry is still before the Government and before when it is to be finalised and when its

report will be published and what would be its terms of reference.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: May I know what personal experience of the hon. Minister prompted her to make the stimulating reply under reference and what is her broad approach to bring about improvements?

Shri Hanumanthaiya: Will the hon. Minister be pleased to tell us the time allotted to Karnatic music in the All India Radio according to the rules? I am told that it is one-third of the time in the national programme and that is not adhered to and the time allotted is not being given. Secondly why in the Delhi Station of the All India Radio most of the time it is Hindi and North Indian music and Karnatic music is not given its due importance?

Shri Vidyacharan Shukla: We have heard reports that there is a move, official as well as non-official, to restrict to scope of the proposed enquiry into the affairs of the All India Radio and these reports have been circulating for some time and it would be very good if the hon. Minister gives clarification about the scope, terms of reference, etc. of the committee which is going to enquire into the affairs of the All India Radio.

श्री सु० वि० चौधरी (महेन्द्रगढ़): प्रश्न: आध घंटे की इस बहस के ऊपर बोलते हुए मेरे साथी श्री नाथ पाई ने आल इंडिया रेडियो के हिन्दी प्रोग्राम की काफी प्रशंसा की है। मैं उनसे पूर्ण सहमत हूँ। मैं हिन्दी का ही प्रोग्राम सुनने वाला हूँ और इस नाते यह दावे के साथ कह सकता हूँ कि यह जो इस पर इल-जाम लगाया गया है, एक तो पंडित मेहरू के सारे के सारे प्रोग्राम को पूरी तरह से कवर न करने का और जब यह इमरजेंसी आई तो उस वक्त से उसके द्वारा ठीक से काम न करने का, यह सरासर गलत इलजाम है। एक हिन्दी

रेडियो प्रोग्राम सुनने के नाते बतौर एक श्रंता के मेरा तजुर्बा है कि जो सर्विस इस हिन्दी विभाग की ओर से रेडियो पर दी जा रही है कोई भी वैसी स्थिति में दूसरा रेडियो नहीं दे सकता है। उसके द्वाग बहुत ही अच्छा काम किया जा रहा है। मैं इस बारे में विशेष तौर से मन्त्री महोदया से जानना चाहूँगा कि इस बारे में उनका क्या तजुर्बा है वे जरा इसे संक्षेप में बतलाने की कृपा करें।

श्री हुकम चन्द कछत्राय (देवास) : पिछली बार बजट सेशन में रेडियो की पूरक मांगों पर बहस के दौरान यह जिक्र आया था कि रेडियो विभाग के अन्दर कुछ पाकिस्तानी जसूस काम करते हैं और यह बात भी सहा है कि रेडियो द्वाग रूस समर्थक प्रचार ज्यादा किया जाता है, तो मैं जानना चाहना हूँ कि क्या यह बातें सही हैं ?

Shri Khadiikar (Khed): May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the Central Hall pass of the News Director of AIR is withdrawn? Shri Nath Pai just now described that AIR is a sensitive instrument which is supposed to reflect the rhythm of social progress in this country. If the News Director is not to keep in touch with the people's representatives, how would it affect the presentation of news by A.I.R.? What has happened to this order—has it been withdrawn or does it still continue?

Shri Ramanathan Chettiar (Karur): May I know whether it has been brought to the notice of the hon. Minister that the present Director-General, to cover up his inefficiency, has got his own lobby to do propaganda and, in case it has not been brought already to her notice, may I know whether she will enquire into it?

Shri Shivaji Rao S. Deshmukh (Parbhani): May I know from the hon. Minister whether, in her appreciative efforts to clean—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. I did not call the hon. Member. I am sorry. There is no time.

श्री श्रीकार लाल बैरा (कोटा) : हुम्ने भी नोटिस दिया है।

Shri Bade (Khargone): On a point of order. The Speaker or whoever is presiding is also bound by the rules. In the rules, it is prescribed that if notice is given before the discussion begins, that Member who had given notice should be given a chance. I was the first one to send a chit along with some other colleagues. If I am not given a chance, how can others be given?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have exceeded the time by 15 minutes. It is not possible to give chance to everybody who sends a chit.

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Shrimati Indira Gandhi): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Shri Nath Pai has delivered a very eloquent and moving speech. If he will allow me to say so, it was not correct in all its aspects. Most of the questions he has asked were answered to the best of our ability in the statement which I had placed on the Table of the House. As the hon. Member has himself pointed out, in that statement, I admitted that much could be done to improve AIR as well as other sections of the Ministry. But perfection is a state which few of us, if any at all, can hope to attain. I know that none of the sections of my Ministry will ever say that they are perfect; no matter what we do, how much we do, there is always room for more to be done and for greater perfection.

Having said that—Shri Nath Pai himself has read out from my statement—I do believe that there is room for improvement, and we are going into this matter very, very thoroughly, and that is why it has taken a little more time than we had anticipated. I shall first deal with some of the particular questions. The question of staff

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

artistes has been mentioned. The number of staff artistes working there are 1,800 and not 13,000.

Shri Nath Pai: That may be the number of staff artistes, but there are 9,000 to 11,000 casual artistes.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: More decisions are adopted by the Committee in which non-officials are included. There were various committees of enquiry. There was one departmental enquiry sometime ago, which made some recommendations, and many of those recommendations have already been implemented. It is also true that all the staff artistes were not satisfied with the Committee or its recommendations, because they were not represented on the Committee itself although they were sent for and their viewpoint was taken. I have myself agreed to meet all those who are now dissatisfied and to see what complaints they have and as far as possible we shall try to meet those complaints.

With regard to the allegations which have been made regarding the way in which the funeral was dealt with, I am sure you will appreciate, I was not in a position to hear these programmes myself and, therefore, I cannot express my personal opinion. These matters are very much a question of one's personal taste. Views have been expressed even in this very short time both for and against the programme, as hon. Members have noticed. This is the state even in the public. There are a large number of people who appreciate the programme and there are people who do not like the way that it was done. But it was also, I think, Members should appreciate, in extremely difficult conditions that the AIR was functioning, because due to enormous crowds they were not able to get through everywhere they wanted to go, they were not able to get the people they wanted for commentary and there were many other difficulties in their way.

With regard to the President's programme, this was entirely up to the President when he will speak. As messages were received of the speech they were announced.

Shri Nath Pai: The President was ready with his speech at three o'clock.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: I am glad Shri Nath Pai has his own spies there. What information the Ministry got finally they had to relay; they were not listening round the corners....

Shri Hanumanthaiya: The gentleman who gave the running commentary on the funeral procession was the most inefficient man I have ever come across.

Shri Thirumala Rao: It has got Press appreciation all over the world.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: I am extremely sorry. He did not mention the arrival of Mr. Dean Rusk and Shri Chavan in a helicopter.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister has not yielded.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: She has yielded, Sir.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: She has yielded to me, not to Shri Hanumanthaiya.

Shri Thirumala Rao: This sort of personal things should not be brought before the House. Shri DeMello is considered to be one of the best men in the world. Our friend here is saying that he is the most inefficient man. I am not here to defend anybody....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Member cannot make a speech now.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: It seems as though he is interested in him personally.

Shri Thirumala Rao: He received the national award only recently:

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: I do agree that it is not fair to mention people by name, especially officials, who are not in a position to answer themselves here.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: I only want to say one thing on a point of personal explanation. He has made that allegation.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. You cannot go on at this rate.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: I will give only one instance by way of personal explanation. When Mr. Dean Rusk and Mr. Chavan our Defence Minister came in a helicopter, that very important item was not mentioned by this great man for whom he has great admiration. (*Interruption*).

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. The Minister must be allowed to continue her speech.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: I had already admitted right at the beginning that we are not claiming to be perfect or that no mistakes were made. I said that right at the beginning and I had have said it several times publicly, privately and in every possible way.

Shri Nath Pai: Should they be so imperfect?

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: Some charges about nepotism and so on were made. I do not believe in this kind of general charge. If the hon. Member has any specific case in view. I think he should intimate it to me and I will certainly look into it.

As far as the Director General's right of appointing people is concerned, he can appoint people who have a fee up to Rs. 500 only.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Without referring to the UPSC?

1308 (A) LSD—8.

Shri Nath Pai: Any Committee to assist him?

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: Yes. Committees have been appointed to assist him.

Then, I am afraid, I do not have the exact amount of time that was devoted to Karnatic music. But we do have Karnatic music in regular broadcasts, in the National Programme and also in Vividh Bharati.

I am sorry, I have no information of what happened in the other House regarding spies from Pakistan, but I can assure the hon. Member that there is no Russian propaganda being carried on by AIR, or indeed propaganda for any other country.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : यह होता था, हुआ है ।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. We cannot proceed in this manner.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: The most important question which Shri Nath Pai and some others have raised is with regard to the Committee of Enquiry which I have talked about myself. As I said, it is taking a little long time because we want to do a thorough job. We are in communication with experts who are advising us how to proceed with it. We hope that this matter will get under way very soon. I had hoped that such a committee could report in three months, but I am told that it would not be possible and the time that is suggested is six months. We have not yet finalized either the names or the terms of reference, but we do want this to be, as I have myself stated on the floor of the House, as thorough as possible and we want to work at two levels: that is, to tell us the things which we can do immediately while they are thinking of bigger changes which may take more time. With regard to the question whether there should be a corporation or not, this is something which

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

has got to be considered at the Cabinet level, although this Committee may give its views on this.

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): Have you suggested to the Cabinet the idea of a corporation?

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: It depends upon what view the Committee takes. I personally do not think that just having a corporation will necessarily improve anything, because it is a question of having the right person in the right place, and that will be just as well in the present circumstances as in a corporation.

Shri Hem Barua: But you do not have the right people at the right places now.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: We will make an attempt to do so.

Having said all this, I must also put another fact before the Members, which is this, that all the departments of the Ministry are working under a very difficult circumstance, which is lack of resources, lack of finance. At every stage we are told to cut down at a time when I personally feel that the Ministry should expand. By expansion I do not mean the personnel necessarily.

Shri Hem Barua: Are we to understand that the Finance Minister is not co-operating?

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: Most of the discontent of the staff artistes are about their emoluments. We cannot increase them until we have larger funds at our disposal. With regard to staff artistes, there are two kinds—regular artistes and artistes engaged on contracts. As far as regular staff are concerned, their emoluments and conditions of service were reviewed by the Second Pay Commission and they are governed by the same rules and procedures as are applicable to all other Government servants.

Dr. Sarojini Mahishi (Dharwar North): But they are not treated as Government servants.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: Even the non-regular artistes have the usual benefits like medical aid, allotment of government residential accommodation, ordinary and maternity leave, travelling allowance and so on.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: What is the number?

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: I do not have separate numbers for them. I am sorry. I can supply them later.

Shri Hem Barua: But you do not allow them to engage in trade union activities.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: They have no associations.

If hon. Members want any other information, I could let them have it later on. I do not have the figures with me. But I want to assure them, as I have done barely a week ago, that though we were thinking of forming this Committee, as I said, nothing has been finalized yet. But we are in touch with experts, and we certainly hope that this work will soon be under way.

But it is not fair to compare the A.I.R. with the B.B.C. The B.B.C. is not only a very big organisation with enormous funds at its disposal; it functions in a very small country. Here in India we are a vast country with many official languages—very many other languages which are not recognised, but which have to be recognised for our purposes.

Shri Hem Barua: Can that be an excuse for inefficiency?

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: We have many programmes in tribal dialects and so on. Programmes have to be beamed at quite different levels. Shri Nath Pai found some of the programmes boring; but we have had reports from experts, not only Indian

experts but people who come from the U.N. and other places, that our radio forums are working exceedingly well, that the village people are taking great interest in them, and that there is a demand for more of them. And we are certainly trying to extend the service. There are already 8,555 of them, whereas in 1959 there were, I think, only about 400—385 or something like that.

And there are farmers' forums and many other rural programmes. I think those are the most important programmes.

Another thing, a weakness which I have seen and which has been mentioned by the committee headed by Shri Vidyalkar, is the lack of co-ordination with some of the other Ministries. That is, that even those programmes which are effective are then blocked, because the information that the villager wants immediately afterwards is not available, whether on family planning or where to get better seed or something which has to be followed up in that particular district or in that particular region. We are also working on that, and we

hope that all these deficiencies will be removed soon.

I only hope that the hon. Members will show a little patience and that they will not attribute personal motives to anybody in this thing. Very many suggestions are coming, and we are all trying to work together to do a better job. It does not help if all kinds of motives are attributed to the people who are working there. That is not conducive either to greater unity or better working.

Shri Hem Barua: Nobody has done that.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: Well, there were suggestions made.

Shri Nath Pai: Not by me.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House now stands adjourned till 11 A.M. on Saturday.

17.48 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday, October 3, 1964/Asvina 11, 1886 (Saka).