

Though, the cow is so useful for us yet there are 3600 authorised butcheries, where 1 crore 22 lakh cows are slaughtered. But more than this number of cows are slaughtered in other butcheries. Emperors Babar, Humayun and Akbar imposed ban on cow slaughtering during their regimes. Our leaders had also staged satyagraha against it during the pre-independence period. A cow protection committee was set up on 1.1.1947. Article 48 of our Constitution also provides ban on cow slaughter since January, 1950.

I, therefore urge upon the Government to impose strictly a total ban on cow slaughter in order to protect Indian culture, environment and public health.

[English]

15.05½ hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE. DISAPPROVAL OF CABLE TELEVISION NETWORKS (REGULATION) ORDINANCE AND CABLE TELEVISION NETWORKS (REGULATION) BILL—Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we shall take up further discussion on items No. 13 and 14. The Hon. Minister was on his legs and he will continue. Of course, if any clarifications are required, you can seek them afterwards.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO): Thank, you, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir. Yesterday I was on my feet and I gave the fundamental points of this Ordinance which contains all the provisions of the Bill which was earlier introduced in the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd of August, 1993, along with the amendments suggested by the Standing Committee and accepted by the Government. These are: (i) it sought to give legality where it did not exist; (ii) it brought in legislation for the first time where nothing existed; and (iii) it gave legitimacy where none existed. Therefore, the Ordinance provides for the registration of cable operators, for which the Postmasters of the Head Post Offices in the country have been notified as the registering authority.

15.06 hrs.

(SHRI TARA SINGH *in the Chair*)

Not only have they received the instructions but every week it is being monitored and the report sent to the Secretary of the Department of Posts. Instructions have been received any they have also confirmed the same.

The second provision is that only Indian citizens or companies in which not less than fifty-one per cent of the paid-up share capital is held by the citizens of India, can be registered as cable operators.

Thirdly, there are certain obligations. The first obligation is to ensure that the programmes, other than those which can be received without the use of any specialised gadgets or decoders, conform to the programmes and advertising codes notified by the Central Government, which have been notified in the Gazette of India, published the same

day as the promulgation of the Ordinance, that is, 29th of September, 1994. The second obligation is to re-transmit at least two Doordarshan satellite channels. Earlier on, in the original Bill, when it went to the Standing Committee in 1993, there was an obligation for one channel, but on the 15th August, 1993, we started having five channels and now we have eleven regional satellite-derived channels. Therefore, the obligation of having one regional channel and one more channel of Doordarshan is the obligation on the part of the cable operators. The third obligation is to replace the existing equipment with that conforming to the standards laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards Institution, within a period of three years from the establishment and publication of the standards. The fourth obligation is the imposition of some penalties for violation of the provisions of the Ordinance, including seizure and confiscation of equipment, fine and imprisonment.

Then, there is a designation of a competent authority having powers to sanction prosecution and to issue restraint orders in the public interest to prohibit the cable operators from carrying on any particular programme. This has been apprehension in the minds of many hon. Members who have supported the Bill but who have opposed bringing it in the form of an Ordinance. Otherwise, in letter and spirit, they are very much in agreement.

Therefore, these are all within the Indian Penal Code and the existing skeletal laws of the country. The State Governments have been requested to notify the Collector or the District Magistrate or the Sub-Divisional Magistrate as the competent authority. That is a Group-A post. Therefore, the enforcement agency will be the District Collector and the Sub-Divisional Magistrate. In some States, like mine, it is known as Sub-Deputy Collector. Therefore, the designated officer and the competent authority has been spelt out and the States are the ones who are going to implement it.

Sir, then the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 provide for a registration fee of Rs. 50 per annum. It is only Rs. 50 per annum. I think hon. Member Dr. Rupchand Pal and another hon. Member wanted to know what is the quantum of the fee. Today, in 1995, Rs. 50 is chicken feed. The Rules provide for adherence to the Programme Code and the Advertisement Code. I only beg to submit that my hon. colleagues here are the ones who had approved and passed the Advertising and Programming Code in this very House when hon. Member Shri L.K. Advani was the Minister for Information and Broadcasting. That is the Advertisement Code and Programme Code which have been incorporated as the Advertisement Code and Programme Code in the Gazette notification. This is not something which the Government of India or the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has suddenly imagined. This is what had been passed and approved by the House as far back as 1978 which, in the combined wisdom of both the Houses, has not been thought fit to be either amended or modified or restricted.

Then the fourth thing which the Rules wish to do is that

a register is to be maintained by the cable operators. On this also, we have agreed with the views of the Standing Committee of which many of the Members who participated in the debate are the Member. I will come to that separately. The Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha on 13.12.1994 and it could not come up for discussion in the Lok Sabha although in the winter session it was listed. Therefore, it was necessary to promulgate another Ordinance because it was expiring on 17.1.1995. Therefore, I am coming here on the first available day of the present session to this august House for passing it.

Some of the recommendations of the Standing Committee — in fact, most of them — have been accepted by the Government. In case of those where we have had slight difference in perception, we have had the advantage of consultation with the Law Ministry and under the advice of the Law Ministry we have modified one or two provisions and we have not accepted one or two provisions. Otherwise most of the things have been accepted.

In Clause 2 the words are "as a commercial activity". It was the reflection of the Standing Committee that those undertaking only commercial activity should be brought into its ambit. After close scrutiny and consultation with the Law Ministry, it was felt that if these words are added, it will remove a large number of households such as cooperative societies and also many educational institutions from the scope. I gave an example to the hon. Chairman presiding in the Rajya Sabha — we both belong to the same *alma mater*, Jadavpur University, Calcutta — where our University is sprawled on both sides of the street and the Telegraph Act prohibits any wire or line crossing any road. So, this would be *ultra vires* of that law and, therefore, the Law Ministry advised us and we accepted the advice of the Law Ministry. I think the sense of the House is that the cable operators must adhere to our national dignity, to our national culture and this is also the reflection of the Standing Committee who have opined and recommended that certain programmes which are coming *via* satellite are total antithesis on our holistic culture and our cultural ethos.

Therefore, this has not been agreed to and the next one is Clause 5 which is regarding 'Programme Code'. The recommendation says that prior knowledge is a must and we have accepted the recommendation of the Standing Committee that unless V.C.R./V.C.P. or encrypted programme is there the cable operator should not be penalised.

Then, there is the question of Clause 7 which is regarding maintenance of register. Regarding this also the Standing Committee had recommended that unnecessary details need not be maintained by the cable operator who may have to do a lot of paper work because of the multiplicity of channels coming over India apart from many channels of Doordarshan. So, we are keeping the provision of having the bare existence of V.C.R./V.C.P. and the encrypted things.

Then, Clause 15 is about the 'right of appeal'. On this point, the Standing Committee had recommended that

there should be a second appeal. So, in consultation with the Law Ministry it was made abundantly clear that it is not necessary to add the question of a second appeal because according to Section 17 of the General Purpose Act, 1897, a district judge shall mean the judge of a Principal Civil Court or original jurisdiction, but shall not include a High Court in the exercise of its ordinary or extraordinary civil jurisdiction. So, on this point the Law Ministry advised that appeal can be made to the High Court and to the Supreme Court too through a Special Leave Petition and so it is not necessary to put it down in writing because these provisions already exist.

In Clause 19 the point is about "or any other ground whatsoever". On this point, the Standing Committee felt that it is a sweeping statement and it may lead to harassment as one of the hon. Members pointed out. So, these words, "any other ground whatsoever" will be qualified by the words to be recorded in writing. In this also, the Law Ministry has given the recommendation that it is the legal requirement and that all such orders should be backed by reasons. They said that the order has to be in writing and this is implied. They said that there is no need to state it in explicit terms. So, it has not been made bulky by writing on it because the implied meaning is there and it is one of the requirements under Sections 153, 153A and 153B of the Indian Penal Code.

Then, the next point is about Group 'A' Officer authorised under Clause 19. Regarding this, the hon. Member from Tamil Nadu felt that the officer may be biased or he may be whimsical and there may be miscarriage of justice. So, the State Governments have been authorised under Clause 19 in which case, as I mentioned earlier, the District Magistrate or the Sub-Divisional Magistrate will be there who are very much under the control of the State Governments. So, there will be no miscarriage of justice and there are various other remedies in the Bill.

There were certain reflections on the advertising code which are already there in the Gazette Notification published on 12th September, 1994. So, there is no ambiguity or vagueness about what the advertising code is or what the programme code is. These are available with all the Chief Post Masters General as well as all the Post Offices from where the cable operators have to take the forms for registry by paying Rs. 50/-.

Now, I will come to the points made by some of the individual Members. Prof. Rupchand Pal who is a distinguished Member of the Consultative Committee attached to my Ministry and who makes very important contributions in the Committee has spoken about the rapidly changing technological revolution, the desirability of a National Media Policy and the satellite invasion into our cultural values and ethos and that we should take into consideration the latest Information Highway and other technological evolutions which are taking place. He also mentioned about the programme code in re-transmitting.

He wanted an information policy, a national policy, a cultural policy and a national media policy. He also said

that the Doordarshan has been blacking out certain important functions and has been showing and exhibiting certain unimportant people and functions. I will come to that later.

The question of having a national media policy was deliberated upon in our Consultative Committee. It was decided that we will have a sub-Committee of the Consultative Committee of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to prepare a Positional Paper for the hon. Members of the Consultative Committee. But it sent out such a terrible signal that I received a spate of letters from Editors' Guild, Press Council and from everywhere. Sir, where there is a feeling that the freedom of the Press may be infringed or may be curtailed, I would beg to submit that we proceed in a very cautious manner. Otherwise, Parliament may not be charged that it is trying to tamper with or restrict the press. Therefore, we will have a broader discussion on what an information, media and a cultural policy should be in the light of the latest developments, especially, the Supreme Court judgement on the control of the airwaves and the question of Prasar Bharti Act which was passed by this hon. House in 1990 during late Shri Rajiv Gandhi's when he had supported the amendments. So, we are committed to the passing of the Prasar Bharti legislation and to the enactment of the Prasar Bharti Act.

Sir, I would like to know is Prasar Bharti as it was envisaged in 1990 when invasion of the satellite channels, the information super highways, Supreme Court judgement and the new technological innovations make a mockery of any law which is existing whether the structure as was envisaged in 1990 would serve our purpose or not. This is exactly the question which is being gone in-depth and there are different Departments of Government of India, like Space, Telecommunications, which have to be consulted in the light of the Supreme Court judgement which is a landmark judgement on the control of the airwaves and on the Fundamental Rights of the citizens, the Right to Information and the Access the Information. So, these cannot be hurried across as a debating point.

Therefore, I would seek your indulgence and the indulgence of the House to give us a little more time to study it in-depth so that we may not bring a law or a legislation which may be felt inadequate or deficient in taking care of the situation. I would beg a little more patience for a few more months since we have waited so long. I think it would be beneficial and we would like to be guided by the wisdom of both the Houses of Parliament.

I am grateful to Shri Rupchand Pal for supporting the Bill. We will see that the views expressed by him are examined in-depth and certainly we would like to be profited by the improvements which he has suggested.

Then Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava has also welcomed the Legislation and has also given a list of lacunae in the broadcasting field including the weakness in Jaipur transmitter. I beg an apology for that. Shri Bhargava knows my commitment, respect and regard for Jaipur. I will take his suggestions as a priority item and will see that these lacunae are removed as quickly as possible.

I quite agree that some of the channel programmes which are coming in are detrimental to the minds of our children and our youth. But at the same time, Sir, I would like to submit that it cannot be the responsibility of a Department or a Government, either the Central Government or the State Government; the parents/guardians and teachers also have a role to play in our society. We cannot prevent the children from watching T.V. Therefore, it is incumbent that we must produce good programmes and this is exactly the endeavour of the Doordarshan and it is also the endeavour of this Bill which seeks to rationalise and to standardise the type of programmes which will be permitted by our society in India, the Indian ethos, the Indian culture and the Indian dignity about which many of our hon. Members have spoken. But we do not have any control over the waves of the satellite channels which are coming from outside the country. As I said earlier, we do not believe in Jamming, banning or blacking out any programme including those programmes of my hon. friends from the Opposition. Over the years, Doordarshan has tried to give a balanced coverage to most political parties, in fact, all political parties, even those which are not recognised here in Parliament as recognised political parties, as unattached Members. It is the importance of the news and events and it is not the importance of personalities which is telecast. There may be certain instances where the hon. Members were dissatisfied. And many a time such points have been raised in the consultative Committee and when we have verified, it has been found that the telecasting has not been brought to the notice of the concerned hon. Members, though it has been covered. It might not have been done at a time when it was desired by the hon. Member maybe because on that particular date something of a more priority nature might have had a better pride of place.

Shri Sharvan Patel while supporting the Bill also mentioned about the serious threat and the massive cultural invasion and said that there are people who are flouting some laws of our country. In fact, the other day, I also came across a news item which also brought out that there are FERA violations and that laws of the land are being violated by certain foreign companies. In fact, I have taken the cue and I have sent a copy to the hon. Finance Minister because ours is an I&B Ministry and not IB. I do not have the investigating branch under my Ministry. So, I have drawn their attention to these FERA violations and I am grateful to the hon. Member, Shri Shnavan Patel, for drawing my attention to this. We would like to have a more effective mechanism for enforcement of the code as well as a mechanism for monitoring.

Shri Shnavan Patel also mentioned about the big sharks who are trying to take over this cable industry. As you know, many of the cable operators are ex-servicemen who have put in their pensionary benefits, their provident fund and their entire savings and we would not like to allow these very fine people who have given the best years of their life for the defence of the motherland, for the integrity,

sovereignty and unity of this country to be gobbled up by any multinational or any big sharks, whether Indian or foreign. Government will resist with all its might and I am sure both the Houses of Parliament will join me in the effort to safeguard our small industries and the small scale people including the ex-servicemen who have done yeoman service to the country.

Then, Sir, he also mentioned about promoting quality programmes. I am hundred percent in agreement that in this age of competence and competition, it is only the quality which is going to stand the test of time and it is also a matter of the survival of the fittest in this new economic liberalisation environment. Therefore, it is because of this that Doordarshan and Akashvani have been trying to associate as many talented producers of this country, the young talents to take advantage of the facilities of both Doordarshan and Akashvani through INSAT 2B. As you know, Sir, the All-India Radio has twenty channels the Sky Radio through INSAT 2B. Again, it is a total R&D effort of All-India Radio R&D engineers, the indigenous efforts with indigenous equipment. Now, we have eleven functional channels, that is Satellite channels apart from Doordarshan-I and the Metro Channel which is Doordarshan-II. Our R&D engineers have also succeeded in doing the Digital Compression and Video Technic which compresses one Satellite channel into five channel. It can be done into eight. We are tying it in a limited sphere in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir on educational, sports and cultural programmes. It started in the month of February. It has been started on an experimental basis because financial constraints are preventing us from doing this. Otherwise, we could have sixty channels even today because fifteen channels will be multiplied by four equals sixty. But we are going cautiously because we are conscious that the software—that means the programme—must be of a qualitative nature. It is for this reason that Doordarshan and Akashvani have been, over the last few years, trying to innovate. But we have to function in a very hostile environment. Sometimes, we are Draupadi in Dritarashtra's court where I am duty-bound to lay facts and I have to lay before the Houses of Parliament, the Standing Committee and the other Committees, even commercial confidentiality. Then, of course, my wonderful friends outside the Parliament drag me to court occasionally and in spite of that Doordarshan and Akashvani have not been doing badly at all. They have been fighting and they have been winning and they will win because as long as Parliament and the people of India are behind Doordarshan and Akashvani, there is no power on earth which can prevent Doordarshan from taking its rightful place under the sun. Therefore, it is the quality programmes with which we are trying to involve the ninety crore Indian people to take advantage of. The Government does not wish a monopoly or control over the Doordarshan and Akashvani channels. This is there in the Congress (I) election manifesto of the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, which was drafted by the hon. present Prime Minister. Therefore, we are committed to competition, competence building, professionalism and programming.

The acid test of a programme is the acceptance of it by the viewership. Otherwise, the amount of investment that goes in, the amount of effort and energy which goes in, a producer or a person who is dealing with this business cannot hope to survive in this competitive world if his programmes are not good.

Sir, as the hon. Member Dr. Mamta Banerjee mentioned, in our society there are various segments of people. In this very Parliament we have the urban-oriented, the rural-oriented, the elderly, and the young people all having different tastes, different perceptions and different appreciations. I would like to quote only one example which will give you an inkling of this. There is programme called "Dallas" which, for the last twelve years in the United States, is a bigger hit than the "Bold and Beautiful" and "Santa Barbara". It did not last twelve weeks in India. So, the Indian public are not aping the western consumerism or the western culture. I do not wish to add any more adjectives or adverbs to prefix the word 'culture'. But the Indian ethos is totally different from the western ethos. So what is successful in America may not be successful here. Therefore, we cannot afford to ape anyone hundred per cent. So, it has to be an Indian solution to an Indian problem. This is exactly what Doordarshan and Akashvani are trying to do.

Then, the hon. Member from the AIADMK Party mentioned about some personality of a particular political party who was being given undue importance and some not given that.

It was a very general remark. The hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Jayalalitha has been a valued colleague in the Rajya Sabha about a decade back. Whenever she has had any important function in Tamil Nadu or whatever the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu, the Government of India has always respected and has gone out of its way to be helpful. It can be checked back from us. I stand by what I am saying with all the emphasis at my command without fear of contradiction and with all the sense of responsibility. I am glad that he has supported the Bill.

Then I am extremely grateful to Dr. Mamata Banerjee for the very incisive comments and for her valuable support. She has made my job of answering all the points raised by the hon. Members much easier. She has spoken about the poor and the elite, the urban and the rural and the mixed bag of viewers to which Doordarshan has catered to. Both Doordarshan and Akashvani are not only public service broadcasters but they have a definite role to play as an aid to development; it is not just entertainment which is the job of Doordarshan and Akashvani.

The first point is to inform, to educate and to create awareness. Today, Sir, media is no more a service in this technological revolution. In these days of information super highway which we read so much, we have already adopted it in our country. Hon. Prime Minister the other day has got the Department of Space to do something on the educational programmes through its transponders. So also the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting which is trying to find a Indian solution to the Indian problem by linking

some of our satellite channels to have programmes on education, agriculture, science and technology, health care so that a common man can get access in a modified way to the sophisticated information super highway which is existing in Europe and America.

Therefore, the best doctors of our country in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, PGI, Jaskok, may be Vellore, a common man in the rural area, say of Orissa or Bihar, can get the advantage by the linkages. We are in consultation with the Department of Telecommunications because the fibre optics are being handled by them. A lot of innovation are taking place. When we are ready, we shall definitely come forward and take the House into confidence. It is in the embryonic stage at the moment. In a pilot project, we are doing it in an experimental way. We do not wish to say too much because in the experimental stage, comments denigrating the efforts may demoralise our people because we are not that lucky to get always pats on the back and bouquets. Our experience has been that we are getting more brickbats than bouquets.

Then Dr. Banerjee also mentioned about sports persons, Arjuna awardees, Commonwealth Games medalists and Olympians to be associated. I mean nothing could be nearer to my heart. My young colleague Sh. Mukul Wasnik and the second generation is with me in Parliament. He has been instrumental in getting us a lot of sports programmes in Doordarshan. I am grateful to Shri Wasnik as well as Dr. Banerjee who was also a Minister in the Department. We would like to broad base our association of professional people, sports people, cultural people, literacy people in the Advisory Committee of both Akashvani and Doordarshan. It will be to our benefit, to the country's benefit and to the Ministry's benefit if such people are associated with us.

Therefore, this is a very very constructive suggestion which I wholeheartedly accept and support. She had wanted certain details of programmes of political parties which had been given coverage.

Sir, if you want I will lay it on the Table of the House.

I have misplaced the paper somewhere. But, in the last three months, more or less the Congress has been given just about fifty per cent of the time and all the other political parties, in proportion to their strength in the Parliament, have been given the rest. In certain months, the hon. CPM Party in West Bengal has got four times the amount of time which the Congress got. That was in the month of November.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI (Garhwal): You are giving time to everybody except the main opposition party.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Yesterday, General Sahab, if you had seen the international Doordarshan which we launched, BJP took two-thirds of the time as compared to Congress. I was only worried that some of my party colleagues may say that.....

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: You want us to go to international field. But we want it to be national.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: I was only meeting your point. In fact, if one goes by the figures which I will furnish, you can analyse yourself that proportionate to their strength in the Lok Sabha, people have been given more time than what is necessary.

Mr. P.C. Thomas also drew our attention that most of these channels are as a result of the innovations made by our late Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, who really made the first step towards liberalising the State-owned and State-controlled electronics media and I am grateful to him. He has also spoken about the advisory bodies and the programme codes. I would like to tell you that when he said it is yet to be defined, it is there in the rules which were published on the 29th September.

Then Mr. Gangwar also mentioned the same thing and he spoke about the penal provisions. The penal provisions have been incorporated in the Bill after due consultation with the Ministry of Law. So I shall convey the views of the hon. Members and we will consult the Law Ministry and seek their views because I would not like to bring here anything without the consultation of the Law Ministry.

Then Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat wanted, to say that this was an undemocratic manner. I had answered elaborately his hon. colleague Mr. Viren Shah in the other House when he raised the point of bringing it through an ordinance. It is only during very trying circumstances when the Parliament is not in session we, in our combined wisdom, have given the hon. President the right to bring in an ordinance and the reason for bringing it was that the national sovereignty and integrity was sought to be affected. Therefore the Cabinet took a decision on the 20th September and on 29th September the Rashtrapatiiji affixed his signature after due care and after studying it and applying his mind to it. Had the Parliament been in session, we would not have sought recourse to an ordinance. Therefore it is within the letter and spirit of the Constitution and the Constituent Assembly debates. I would like to dispel the apprehension in the mind of Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat that it was not undemocratic; it was most democratic. In fact, on the first day of the session we brought it to the Rajya Sabha and to the Lok Sabha. We did not delay even one second. As I said yesterday, I was fortunate of getting this Bill through to the House in two years' time. Otherwise I was thinking that in my entire tenure the Bill may not see the light of the day because there are far more important subjects rather than the Cable and Television Bill. My distinguished predecessor Ajit Panja introduced two Bills in 1992 which have not yet got the nod for discussions here—the Censorship and Cinematograph Bills.

Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat also mentioned about certain private TV companies which are beaming programmes from outside India. As I said, we neither have the intention nor the ethos of jamming, banning or blacking out anything, although we have the technical competence



I would not like to go into this. In Mahatma Gandhi's country, which has thrown open its windows to all the cultures of the world and refuses to be blown off its feet, I do not think we should ban or jam or black out or copy Iran or China in that respect. He has said that we are powerless. We are not powerless. We are signatories to an international agreement of the telecommunications union. We do not wish to unilaterally jeopardise an international agreement, where we are a founder member. Therefore, we leave it to the viewership. This is not a closed society where we dictate to the people what they should see and what they should not see. Therefore, we leave it to the viewership to deal with such type of programmes which are obnoxious to us.

I quite agree that there should be more educational, historical, agricultural and social development programmes, which is actually what the hon. Prime Minister told us last year when he addressed the Information Ministers' Meet in May. On censorship, he raised a very philosophical question. He said, 'Like the Press Council of India, which is self-regulatory, should we leave it to yourself—regulation? Do you people like to have it as a self-regulatory thing like the Censor Board in UK or would you like the Government to poke its nose and interfere and dictate to you?' This is a very important philosophical question. I hope the people who are interested, the people in the business of films and the people producing these programmes will also engage themselves on this question. On our part, the Government has changed the composition of the Censor Board. Now, we would like to make it as strict as possible. I hope my Bills come up for discussion in the Lok Sabha and in the Rajya Sabha so that I can get all the powers for my hon. colleagues. I would like to implement what my hon. colleagues want. That is, to tighten up the censorship rules.

There is one more point, which Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat mentioned. Ajmer is a place which is very dear to me. I would like to come to the aid of my friend and colleague. My distinguished predecessor, Prof. Girija Vyas tried her level best for two years to put up a high power transmitter on top of Taragarh in Ajmer. The laying of road costs Rs. 3 crore. The project cost is Rs. 8 crore including the transmitter and everything. We have to add Rs. 3 crore on top of it as overhead only for the construction of the road. Everyday about 136 people have to go to work there for maintenance of the transmitter. So, the road has to be constructed there at a cost of Rs. 3 crore. I do not think that, that is my charge or responsibility. So, if the road is constructed by the Rajasthan Government, I can assure that we can start the work on this project, which is already a sanctioned project for which funds are available. Otherwise, in the alternative, these areas would be covered by the LPT, Ajmer. In the meantime, we are going to put up three more low power transmitters to cover some of the areas which are not getting covered by the Ajmer LPT. Once the HPT, Taragarh comes up, thanks to the help of Prof. Vyas, the Government of Rajasthan and my good friend, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, who used to sit alongside me in Rajya Sabha, we will remove these LPTs and install them elsewhere. These were some of the

points made by hon. members and I have answered most of them.

There is a comprehensive Bill. My Ministry has been engaged in bringing out a comprehensive Bill on electronic media over the last six months because the Wireless Act and the Telegraph Act are antiquated and were found to be deficient in tackling the situation arising out of the technological innovations, etc. The Supreme Court judgement delivered about a fortnight ago will also have to be taken into consideration. I would beg indulgence of this house to give us a little more time to study it in depth and bring a comprehensive Bill, which will reflect the views of the hon. Members and also bring in a new technological revolution.

Thank you very much for giving me time, Sir, and I thank the hon. Members for their solid support and for the very valuable points.

MR CHAIRMAN: Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat, are you withdrawing your Resolution?

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the views expressed about the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Bill, reveals that intensions behind bringing this Bill are good but the practice of introducing this Bill through ordinance is undemocratic. As the budget session was likely to commence, this tendency of issuing ordinance cannot be called a good tendency.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Minister has mentioned about Taragarh in Ajmer I would like to say that the State Government and city Development Trust is going to start a programme and Department of Tourism and Department of Archaeology are going to install a statue of Prithviraj Chauhan. I would like to say that Government should set up a high power Transmitter (T.V. Tower) which will benefit the whole area especially border area.

India is a country of Mahatma Gandhi where everyone is free to express his views and ideas of every person is given due importance our old saints and rishis had pondered over this issue. But today obscenity is being presented in the name of culture. It is a dangerous tendency for the country. Cable networks of our country can be dealt under the purview of this Law but not the foreign cable networks like Star T.V. CNN and MTV etc. There is need for making this Law effective and comprehensive to control these cable networks. Sir, through you I would like to say that interests of the country should be considered supreme. I had also said that a separate policy should be formulated for Doordarshan and cable network which could telecast Indian folk art, folk literature and folk culture and an agreement should be signed to control the foreign cable network that these can be given assistance if their programmes will be in accordance with the Indian culture.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government has imposed ban that programmes of Doordarshan and films should be telecast through satellites. It is a different thing that they will accept it or not. I would like to know about your powers in this regard. It is laxity on the part of the Government that this ordinance was issued in September 1994 and forms were not available in post offices upto December. I would

like to know that how many person have registered their names for cable networks during these three months. I would like to say that in view of the interests of the country Government should take effective measures to control foreign cable networks. For effective functioning of Doordarshan and Akashvani an autonomous authority should be set up to control them. Thus electronic media will come out of the Government control. We talk about the Prasar Bharati for removal of complaints of political parties about the routine type of programmes telecast by Doordarshan. It should also be for maintaining the Indian values and culture. A committee should be set up to monitor the programmes of cable networks.

In view of the good intentions and objectives behind this resolution and hoping for an effective and comprehensive law on it, with these words I seek leave of the House to withdraw this Resolution.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw the Resolution?

*The Resolution was, by leave withdrawn*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill to regulate the operation of cable television networks in the country and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

*The motion was adopted.*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will not take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That Clauses 2 to 22 do stand part of the Bill."

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clauses 2 to 22 were added to the Bill*

*Clause 23 Repeal and Savings*

*Amendment made:*

1. Page 7,—

*for lines 13 and 14, Substitute—*

"23. (1) The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Ordinance, 1995 is hereby repealed. (3)  
(Shri K.P. Singh Deo)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That Clause 23, as amended, stand part to the Bill."

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clause 23, as amended, was added to the Bill.*

*Clause 1 Short title, extend and Commencement*

*Amendment made:*

2. Page 1, line 6,—

*for "1994" Substitute "1995" (2)*

(Shri K.P. Singh Deo)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That Clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

*The motion was adopted.*

Clause 1, as amended, was added to the Bill.

*Enacting Formula*

*Amendment made.*

1. Page 1, line 1,—

*for "Forty-fifth" Substitute "Forty-sixth"(1)*

(Shri K.P. Singh Deo)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Enacting Formula, as amended, and Long-Title stand part of the Bill."

*The motion was adopted.*

*The Enacting Formula, as amended, and Long-Title were added to the Bill.*

*The Title was added to the Bill.*

Shri K.P. Singh Deo: I beg to move:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to share my concern, apprehensions and some ideas with the hon. Minister, who, I feel, has done a tremendous job of bringing a new vigour in the working of the Ministry of information and Broadcasting and under whose stewardship the Doordarshan has made tremendous progress. I find that the word prescribed before the programme code and the advertising code are rather vague.

16.00 hrs.

It does not say by whom it is prescribed, under which law and under what authority. I think that should have been spelt out I would be failing in my duty if I do not say that there is, in the country, even today, a certain degree of dissatisfaction with both the programme code and the advertising code. I hope they are not the final word on the subject and shall be kept under constant review and shall be made to be in line with the ethos of our country. And if there is any class of gender bias or even on elite and urban orientation, that should be done away with.

My second point is with regard to the liability to retransmit two programmes of the Doordarshan. I was wondering as to why there cannot be a negative liability, that is, not to retransmit any foreign programmes. Why could not that be put into the Act?

My third point is this. The penal provisions are rather light. When Rs. 50 is a chicken feed, obviously even Rs. 1000 is not a very heavy sum. I feel that at least in the case of Codovidation, the penal provisions should have been much higher.

There is one point about the cultural invasion. The Minister has said that in a global village, there are open

skies and we cannot control satellite transmissions. Obviously, we have not build any antenna which would receive only one set of waves and not the other set of waves. But I do not know whether this problem is not perplexing many countries in the developing world and whether there is any degree of consultation among the developing countries on how to fight this menace of westernisation a cultural menace which is now afflicting all our people and in fact, uprooting the old ancient culture from their moorings?

My final point is this. If it is a step towards liberalisation of television in our country, I think the hon. Minister should now think in terms of giving authority to or rather encouraging the State Governments and even the district authorities to have local television stations so that they would focus on local programmes, needs and demands as well as give a certain amount of promotion to the local variation of our composite Indian culture.

I fully appreciate the fact that television cannot remain a Government monopoly. It is a welcome step towards liberalisations if I may say so, privatisations and therefore, in that sense, I welcome this Bill. But as I said, some of the provisions in the Bill need to be further refined.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: I welcome the suggestions given by the hon. Member, Shri Shahabuddin. They are very very important suggestions. We are quite aware and conscious that we must safeguard our cultural ethos and at the moment we would not like to follow the example of countries in respect of banning or jamming or trying to black out. Many countries have totally banned even the installation of the dish antenna because without appropriate dish antenna, you cannot get the satellite channels. But this is the first step towards regulating and registering and this is not the end of it. This is the first legislation of its kind. We are willing to accept the fact that it is not fool-proof. We are coming with a comprehensive bill and at the time, I would like to have the combined wisdom of the House before we pass it and I would be very grateful for your views.

The penal provisions are like this. As I mentioned earlier, it was vetted by the Standing Committee who wanted it not to be a draconian measure and specially because small scale industries, ex-service men and retired people have invested more than a lakh of rupees in it. They wanted it and we have gone by their recommendations. The Law Ministry has also vetted and the competent authority is the District Magistrate and the Sub-Divisional Magistrate because the Central Government has no implementing agencies in a large number. Therefore, these points have been looked into. We will again look into then while drafting a comprehensive bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

*The motion was adopted.*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stand adjourned to meet again at 5 P.M.

16.05 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha adjourned till Seventeen of the Clock.*

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Seventeen of the Clock  
(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)*

#### GENERAL BUDGET 1995-96

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH): Sir, I rise to present the Budget for 1995-96.

Four years have passed since our Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, took office in the midst of an unprecedented economic crisis. Our immediate task was to save the nation from a relentless slide into the abyss of falling production, soaring inflation and deepening poverty. We dealt swiftly with the immediate crisis and we also worked towards a broader objective of shifting the economy on to a path of rapid, employment-generating growth. Our aim was to raise India to her rightful place in the comity of nations.

Sometimes, in the heat of political debate, we lose sight of what has already been achieved. Let me take a few minutes to outline how far we have come since those grim days of 1991:

- \* The growth of our economy had fallen to less than one per cent in 1991-92. We brought the economy back to a growth of 4.3 per cent per year in the two years thereafter, and growth has accelerated further to 5.3 per cent in 1994-95. Few countries can claim as quick and smooth a recovery from as deep an economic crisis that we faced in 1991.
- \* Industrial growth had collapsed to about half of one per cent in 1991-92. Today, Indian industry is experiencing a vibrant, broad-based recovery with industrial growth of 8.7 per cent in April-November, 1994. The manufacturing sector is growing even faster at 9.2 per cent and the capital goods sector is growing at 24.7 per cent. I hope that those critics who predicted that our industrial and trade reforms would hurt Indian industry will look at the reality and think again.
- \* There are signs of a strong revival in domestic industrial investment in 1994-95 as Indian industry modernises and upgrades technology, and improves competitiveness. Foreign direct investment is also responding well to the new policies, with large investments flowing into key infrastructure sectors such as Power and Telecommunications.
- \* Foodgrain production had fallen to 168 million tonnes in 1991-92. This year, it will be an all-time record of 185 million tonnes. Our farmers have clearly benefited from the policy of offering remunerative prices and have returned a strong production performance, for which they deserve our gratitude.
- \* Public stocks of foodgrain, which provide an invaluable insurance against bad weather and other contingencies, had declined to 14.7 million tonnes three years ago. They have been rebuilt to a record level of 31 million tonnes, as on January 1, 1995.