

MR. SPEAKER: No points of order during the Question Hour.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: I am not on a point of order at all. You have to hear me. I have written to you twice...

MR. SPEAKER: You may come to my chamber and discuss the matter. This is not allowed.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Two hundred questions for Lok Sabha is all right, but when 9 Assemblies have been dissolved, that shows their faith in democracy.

MR. SPEAKER: You may discuss it in my chamber.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Sir, 9 Assemblies have been dissolved. (Interruptions). There should be 400 questions.

(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bosu, this thing has been already considered by the Rules Committee and there are certain rules. You may consult them and discuss it in my chamber.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Is there a precedent of 9 Assemblies being dissolved?

(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: Now the Prime Minister will introduce the Ministers.

11.05 hrs.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MINISTERS

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): Sir, I have pleasure in introducing to you and through you to the House my colleagues:

Shri C. M. Stephen, Minister of Communications,

Shri Veerendra Patil, Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals,

Shri C. P. N. Singh, Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence and Departments under the charge of Prime Minister,

Shri Sita Ram Kesri, Minister of State in the Department of Parliamentary Affairs,

Shri Charanjit Chanana, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry,

Shri Z. R. Ansari, Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Freedom for Mass Media

*1. SHRI R. P. YADAV:

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether in order to show that mass media like radio and TV should remain free from all control and compulsion, a Broadcasting Corporation is proposed to be established; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The basic function of these mass media is to serve the people. Formation of a Corporation, whether by statute or otherwise, may not by itself help in the fulfilment of this objective.

SHRI R. P. YADAV: For a vast democratic country like India, freedom of the mass media is a must, but unfortunately here in our country this has been the practice that whosoever is in power, the mass media have to toe his line. That is why when Madam Gandhi was in power, the All India Radio was called All Indira

Radio, and when the Janata Party was in power, the Akash Vani was called Advani Vani. In this context, will it not be proper to form a corporation to give credibility to the Radio and T. V. before they are called "Sathe Sound"?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The hon. Member has gone from the sublime to the ridiculous. (*interruptions*) Because the supplementary is whether it would be called Sathe Radio. To that I am replying. If you give, you must also be ready to take. Don't be so sensitive.

I have said that the whole object of these media, radio and T.V., is to serve the people who are not at present being served by any other media like the newspapers. This is a responsibility and a duty which the Government cannot give up.

As far as the question of freedom to these media is concerned, functional autonomy or administrative autonomy is understandable, but that is something internal, but if we think in terms of statutory autonomy and give them a structure where these media may turn commercial and may not serve the people, then we give up Government's responsibility to the people, which it cannot do.

SHRI R. P. YADAV: On the 29th March I addressed a big press conference at Saharsa in Bihar where these radio people were also there, and I had demanded the resignation of the Central Government because nine State Assemblies had been dissolved on the ground that the State had not given protection to the Harijans, that there was worsening law and order situation and price rise, but even under President's rule, the shameful Pipra carnage was there in Bihar and the most heinous atrocities were committed against the Harijans. The essential commodities are not available.

MR. SPEAKER: You should be relevant.

SHRI R. P. YADAV: The law and order situation is the worst ever heard of.

MR. SPEAKER: You have to put a question.

SHRI R. P. YADAV: I am coming to the question.

MR. SPEAKER: No arguments.

SHRI R. P. YADAV: But not a single word was there either in the Radio or in the press.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you reading a statement?

SHRI R. P. YADAV: May I know from the hon. Minister whether press censorship has again been introduced in this country and whether this is the service of the people of the country as contemplated by the Prime Minister?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: There is no question of censorship on the press. The press is completely free to give any news in the manner they want. On this subject, if my friend is referring to the incidents in Bihar and other places like UP, the press has given news and that has been done on the Radio and TV also. My friend is wrong when he says that this was not broadcast either on the Radio or TV. Therefore the whole premise is wrong. If he does not read papers or does not listen to the Radio, I can't help it.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: In view of the fact that this is a major channel available with the Government to communicate, educate and entertain the public, I would like to know what concrete steps have been taken or are being contemplated by the Government to allow greater initiative, creativity and objectivity and broad-base it as far as the programmes are concerned to be relevant to the common man.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Soon after taking over charge, I have already gone into this question of programming and the entire software. I have set up groups within the Ministry and both these media to go into this whole question and to see how we can improve the programmes and make them more relevant for our people in the rural areas.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Will the Minister kindly tell us whether he has gone through the Verghese Committee Report, which really says (page 74 Appendix III) :

"We are of the opinion that all the national broadcasting services should be vested exclusively in an independent, impartial and autonomous organisation established by law, by President to Act as a Trustee of the national institution; the autonomy of the Corporation and its independence from Government control should be entrenched in the Constitution itself and the idea of a Trust woven into it."

I would like to know what steps the Government contemplate to take on the basis of this well written and well founded Report.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I have seen the necessary portion. But I would like to invite the attention of the hon. Member to page 23A of the Report. The Verghese Committee Report itself says:

"Autonomy is not just a matter of structure or form. It is essentially a matter of...."

(Interruptions)

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: He is debating by question. (Interruptions).

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I am not yielding. You should read the whole Report. Do not quote it out of context.

"..It is essentially a matter of substance. Whatever may be the

external form or structure given to any institution, its real character and its relationship towards others will depend on factors which are beyond the pale of law and will reflect the real life situation."

That is why I said, we have to serve the people, 80 percent of the people and therefore, even in terms of the Verghese Committee Report, we are justified in taking the stand that we have taken.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: I seek your protection. The recommendations are summed up at the end of the Report. We do not go into the narrative parts which are dialogues within the Committee. In the recommendations, they have clearly spelt out this and the Minister should reply as to what action he proposes to take on this. He has no reply to give.

DR. KARAN SINGH: We are in agreement with the hon. Minister when he says that the purpose of these mass media must obviously be to serve the people. But I would like the Minister to clarify as to why he is ruling out the possibility of a public sector corporation in order to make this service more effective and more democratic. He seems to imply in his reply to the main question that if you make it a corporation, it goes out of the hands of the Government and therefore, you will not fulfil this responsibility. But a public sector corporation is a well accepted mechanism to get whether in Airlines or various other things, which can be used to give you flexibility to get more imagination and more talent involved. Why is the hon. Minister giving up the possibility of utilising the important mechanism of public sector corporation by taking, what appears to be, a somewhat rigid stand on this issue?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: As at present advised, we have considered all

these aspects and we feel we will be able to discharge our duty better by giving more initiative within, to both TV and Radio personnel than by establishing a corporation. That is all.

SHRI SANJAY GANDHI: As the issue raised is about the freedom of radio and T. V. the hon. Minister must be aware that during the Janata rule two persons were suspended from the T. V. for taking the name of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is it a relevant question? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI SANJAY GANDHI: Will the Government take action against those people responsible for the suspension to maintain the freedom and dignity of radio and T. V.?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: It is true that such action was taken for mentioning the name of Mrs. Indira Gandhi....

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame, shame.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I have already taken steps to see that Justice is done to those who were wronged.

SHRI SANJAY GANDHI: He has not answered my question fully will any action be taken against those who were responsible for the suspension?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Necessary action is being taken.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: In view of the fact that long before the Chanda Committee made a recommendation that AIR should be converted into an autonomous public corporation and in view of the Verghese Committee Report which has been just quoted by Mr. Jyotimoy Bosu and also in view of the fact that, as far as I remember, the Prime Minister made a statement that we cannot lose control of the AIR because it is a mass media through which we can reach the people, may I ask the hon. Minister whether not to set up such an

autonomous public corporation will mean curtailment the freedom of the press and that a politically motivated media will only give the Government version to the people so that the freedom of the press is essentially curtailed?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: In view of all the facts stated by the hon. Member, we have come to the conclusion that the freedom of this media will be maintained better and the service of the people will be done by having radio and T.V. as they are.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: There must be a functional control of the mass media of radio and T.V. through which only we can reach the poor people and the rural sections of the people in this country. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister has got any information about the previous Government having recruited RSS people in the mass media and converted such a mass media to their own advantage, to abuse and misuse the mass media, thereby establishing their own establishment in the mass media. I want to know whether such clandestine recruitments are still there to scuttle the present pragmatic policy of the present Government regarding the mass media and, if so, will the hon. Minister assure a full inquiry into the recruitment of such people in this organisation who are allegiance to RSS if we want to have a functional control on the mass media to meet the situation and the demand of the country?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: It is a clear policy stand of the Government that any person belonging to a political organisation and, according to us, the RSS is a political organisation... (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: Let the Minister reply.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: No person belonging to a political organisation can be in Government service.

Therefore, if it is brought to our notice that such persons belonging to RSS have been inducted into Government service, necessary steps will be taken against them. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV: This House has often expressed its concern about the way the mass media, particularly the T.V. and the Radio, have been used by different Governments. Even today you have seen that there are charges that the Janata Party Government misused the mass media and there was a time when the allegation was that the All India Radio had become All India Radio... (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order;

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV: That proves the point that allegations are there from both sides that, from time to time, Governments have hissed the mass media. Therefore, this media, which is a powerful mass media...

MR. SPEAKER: He has quite assured the House now.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV: Assurances of the Government are never fulfilled!

There is a tendency from the Minister's end. We see that the Minister and the Government have lost faith in autonomous bodies and corporations and we see that even an autonomous body like the Election Commission is being pressurised. (*Interruptions*.) Does it mean that the Government has lost faith in Corporations and autonomous bodies? Through you I would like to appeal to the Minister, will he give second thought before reaching the hasty conclusion that the Government has finally decided to take a decision that there should be no Corporations?

MR. SPEAKER: Yadavji, if you want to make a request, it should be done privately!

Yes, the Minister.

SHRI VASANT SATHI: Unlike my Hon. friend, I do not believe in having second thought.

Effect of Shortage of Coal on Power Generation

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*3. **DR. FAROOQ ABDULLAH:**

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL:

Will the Minister of **ENERGY AND IRRIGATION AND COAL** be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country sustained a loss of over 5,000 million units of power during the calendar year 1979 mainly because of coal shortage;

(b) whether it is also a fact that some of the major power stations were plagued with persistent coal shortages during the whole of 1979;

(c) what is the position now in 1980;

(d) what steps are being considered to improve the working of these power stations and coal supplies to them;

(e) whether the unprecedented increase of power crisis has affected almost all the industries and is causing great economic setback; and

(f) whether from 20th February, 1980 the power crisis has again cropped up in many States?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND IRRIGATION AND COAL (SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI): (a) to (e). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b). As per information reports received in Central Electricity Authority, it is estimated that there has been a loss of about 2600 million