

should like to close, as I said yesterday to the hon. Member sitting opposite, by saying that I regard this Companies Bill as a *Nigama Chaturvimsati Chintamani*. *Nigama* is company. There was a Prime Minister, Vikram, with the Yadava kings. Not only was he a good Prime Minister but he was also an expert in building temples. Not only was he an expert in building temples but he was also a very learned man, and he composed a book called *Nigama Chaturvimsati Chintamani*, which laid down all the *Samskaras* for human beings, from the womb to the tomb, from birth to death, from the cradle to the grave and from conception to liquidation. This Companies Bill is in the nature of a *Nigama Chaturvimsati Chintamani*, and I do hope that it will succeed in bringing all the desirable *samskaras* to those who take part in *nigamas*.

Shri Gadgil: It did not provide for sterilisation!

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to companies and certain other associations, as reported by the Joint Committee, be taken into consideration".

The motion was adopted.

Shri C. C. Shah: I request that a copy of the speech made by the Finance Minister may be circulated to all the Members.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will ask the office.

Shri D. C. Sharma (Hoshiarpur): and also the book to which the Finance Minister referred!

MOTION RE REPORT OF PRESS COMMISSION

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Dr. Keskar): I beg to move:

"That the Report of the Press Commission be taken into consideration".

The report of the Press Commission—I mean by that not only the main report but also the two other volumes which can be considered to be accessories to the report, has been circulated to Members. It has also been circulated to the State Governments and the various interests concerned, and they have had ample time to consider this matter very carefully. In asking this House to consider and debate this report, I would not like, at the very beginning, to try to put forward my own views or the tentative conclusions that the Government have reached about the various matters connected with the report, because I feel it would be rather unfair for me to come to any such conclusion before having heard the considered views of eminent Members assembled here who have also given thought to this subject. I would like, at the outset, to mention a few facts concerning the Press Commission itself, in order to emphasise the importance of the report itself and the matters with which it is dealing.

As you know, it was in October, 1952 that we appointed the Commission. The terms of reference of the Commission were sufficiently wide to cover practically all aspects of the press. Briefly speaking, they covered the financial and organisational structure of the industry, the working of chains and monopolies in newspapers, external factors tending to influence the press, the service conditions of the working journalists, the adequacy of supplies for the industry, maintenance of high standards of journalism, etc. Most of the matters pertaining to the press, not only as a medium of communication and information, but also as an industry employing a large

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number of people were given as terms of reference for the Commission. The Commission submitted its report in July 1954. I would like to take this opportunity here of complimenting the Commission on the excellent, I might say, superb, report that they have submitted in so short a space of time. If I might remind hon. Members, the British Press Commission took many more years to come to their conclusions and present a report about the conditions of the press in Great Britain. The Commission here had to face more difficult and complex conditions than there. Because, here, some of the very basic data and statistics regarding the press, regarding the circulation of newspapers, regarding even the number of newspapers that are existing in the country, were not available and much time had to be given to the collection of this material. I am afraid, the Commission had to devise summary methods of getting the information as quickly as they could. I therefore think that it is a tribute to the Commission that they were able to present the report in such a short space of time. We had impressed on them at the very beginning that we would like the Commission both for financial reasons and for the reason of doing something for the press, to present the report as soon as it is possible for them. They tried to keep up to the promise and I think the time that they took, that is from October 1952 to July 1954, should not be considered as unduly long.

Here, I hope the House will permit me to pay a tribute to the Chairman of the Press Commission, the late Justice Rajadhyaksha for the great work he did in piloting the Commission and also in guiding its proceedings, and bringing them to nearly unanimous conclusions. He had to deal with a very difficult task and he showed tact, sweetness and reasonableness of temper which enabled the Commission to come to practically unanimous conclusions. I came to know him better only during the Press Commission work and I might here

say that my appreciation and regard for his ability, for his high competence, increased every day during the course of my association with him. It is a great tragedy for the country that immediately after the Commission's work was over, while he was entrusted with another very important enquiry, he passed away. It is possible that some of the exertion on the Commission's work told upon his health and also contributed to the final attack which resulted in his death.

We had another victim of the labours of the Press Commission and I would be failing in my duty if I did not refer to the first Secretary of the Commission Shri Chowla, Director of News Service, All India Radio, who also passed away during the very first quarter of the Commission's work. His work had already earned for him high regard from the Members of the Commission and it is a pity that he was not there to continue that work.

The Commission submitted its report by about the middle of July 1954. I would here like to mention the steps that we took in order to see that the reactions and opinions regarding the Commission's recommendations are gathered as quickly as possible. This I am doing because the Government has been accused of delaying the implementations of the Commission's recommendations. I would like to remind the Members that when the report was submitted in the middle of July, within one month copies of the report were made available to the House and the Members of Parliament and by the end of August, copies were issued to the Members. We have to remember that the subject matter of the Press Commission's report is not something which concerns the Central Government alone. It is not a governmental subject. It is a subject as wide as society and the public. It concerns not only the press people themselves, and not only the Central Government. It also concerns the various States. Because the press is everywhere, there are Press regulations in

all the States. The recommendations of the Commission are general and they cover all aspects of the case. It was therefore highly essential that before the Government makes up its mind about the recommendations of the Commission, the views of all concerned must be taken. I regret that some delay occurred in that. But, when we view the multiplicity of the interests concerned, and the complex nature of the recommendations, we will have to condone that delay. For example, the recommendations cover from service conditions of working journalists to the question of setting up of a newsprint factory in India. Every possible aspect is covered. These will have to be dealt with in separate categories and to get the reactions about them is not always very easy. I am afraid we were not able to get as soon as we liked replies and opinions from various bodies and we had to send a number of reminders. What I want to emphasise is that we tried to expedite the matter as much as possible. In spite of all that, it took the whole of 1954 for us to gather the general opinion of the State Governments and of all the interests concerned regarding the recommendations of the Commission. It is only in the first part of 1955 that the question of the action to be taken, and in what form, could be taken up by Government. I hope, therefore, that the House will agree that in a matter of such importance we did not try to delay beyond what could be called reasonable time. In fact, I would go further and say that in such a matter it would be wrong to hurry up or to precipitate things and take any wrong decision which might have to be changed later, more especially when the matter concerns the press. Members of this House and people outside also are very zealous that the Government should not infringe on the freedom of the press, that the press should not be touched or checked or controlled in any manner, and we ourselves are zealous of this, and we would like to see as little as possible of Government interference. And that is also one of the reasons why

we were very careful in coming to any decision regarding this question.

Here, if you permit me, I would like to make mention of the main recommendations of the Commission. Why I am putting them before the House at this stage is this. No doubt, most of the Members have looked into the recommendations, but as I had mentioned in the statement which we placed on the Table of the House on 22nd December, 1954, there are a large number of recommendations some of minor importance, some which cannot be called principal ones, and I would therefore like to concentrate your attention on the important recommendations of the Commission which Members might consider and give their views so that it will help Government in coming to a definite conclusion.

Naturally, one of the most important ones is regarding the service conditions of working journalists. The other is regarding the revision of law regarding registration of press. There is also the question of the regulation of the economic aspect of the industry by a price-page schedule. There is also the question of the constitution of a Press Council. These are all matters whose mention I am making here because they are things which concern Government inasmuch as they will require legislative action to be taken. You will remember that some of the important recommendations of the Commission concern the industry itself. They are not something in which Government can interfere, but they are general counsel given by the Commission to the newspaper industry for them to follow in order to re-organise the industry on a better basis. Naturally, there the Government cannot do anything except to convey them to the various interests concerned. But, these four or five points I mentioned are those in which if we take any action, legislative action will be necessary, and there are very important principles involved in them. There are certain recommendations

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which only call for what can be called executive action—for example, the question of Government advertisement policy and also the question of accreditation of correspondents and liaison with the press, i.e., advisory committees. There is also an important question regarding the news agencies.

Now, all these questions are such as will no doubt create a good debate in this House, and I shall be very grateful to get the considered views of the Members of this House regarding all these matters.

I might say here that in the last session of this House this question was likely to come up and at that time Government had not yet been able to reach any tentative conclusions regarding most of the recommendations, though it is quite possible that if a debate had been held, it would have helped Government in coming to a decision. Probably no time was found. But I might say that today Government has come to some tentative conclusions regarding most of the recommendations of the Commission. There are one or two matters which are pending and which are being discussed, and even on those about which we have formed an opinion and those about which we are at present discussing an expression of opinion by the House will guide us in coming to definite conclusions. In fact, one of the reasons why we did not finalise our various conclusions was that we wanted to have the benefit of the opinion of the eminent members of this House and the other before taking any final decision. It is quite possible that in certain matters though we have come to some tentative conclusion, a discussion in the House might make us change that opinion, and therefore we have kept them pending for this debate in order to come to definite conclusions.

I do not want at this stage to say anything further. I will reserve my detailed remarks about the recommendations themselves for the end of

the debate after I have heard the learned and considered views of the Members of this House.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

“That the Report of the Press Commission be taken into consideration.”

Notices of amendments have been tabled already. Such of them for which hon. Members who want to move them are in the House and express a desire to have them moved might say so. Subject to that, I will treat the amendments which are on the Order Paper as moved.

Shri Thimmaiah (Kolar—Reserved—Sch. Castes): I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

“This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission is of the opinion that early steps should be taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission, particularly the recommendations relating to—

- (a) minimum wages and other conditions of service of working journalists;
- (b) promotion of the growth of small, medium and independent papers through such measures as introduction of price-page schedule, import of news-print through state monopoly corporation and distribution of it at equated price to all newspapers;
- (c) adoption of a rational advertisement policy;
- (d) re-organisation of news agency; and
- (e) setting up of a Press Council at an early date.”

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta North-East): I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission is of opinion that early steps should be taken to implement all the recommendations of the Commission."

Shri D. C. Sharma (Hoshiarpur): I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission is of the opinion that immediate steps should be taken by Government to implement the recommendations of the Commission specially by—

- (a) fixing a minimum wage and regulating the other conditions of service as recommended by the Commission;
- (b) bringing the newspaper industry under the control of the Centre;
- (c) prohibiting the various restrictive and unfair practices in the industry and fixing a price-page schedule;
- (d) transforming the ownership, structure and management of the P.T.I. and U.P.I. as recommended by the Commission;
- (e) setting up of a Press Council with statutory protection to the Council against civil or criminal liability for its discussions or publications;
- (f) undertaking of state trading corporation for importing newsprint and selling it at an equated price to all newspapers and periodicals; and
- (g) undertaking the amendment of the various Press laws, as suggested by the Commission."

Shri Dabhi (Khaira North): I beg to move:

That in the substitute motion proposed by Shri Thimmaiah, after part

(e), the following new parts be added:

"(f) banning by law of cross-words and similar other prize competitions; and

(g) banning by law of objectionable advertisements."

Shri Raghuramaiah (Tenali): I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission, generally approves its recommendations and requests the Government to take steps to implement the same as early as possible".

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad. Notice has been received now. This is the same thing as some other amendments. Those amendments are a little longer with some more details. That is all the difference. Therefore, I waive notice in the case of these amendments.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad (Purnea cum Santal Parganas): I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission welcomes the Report and recommends to the Government its early implementation."

Shri K. P. Tripathi: I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission generally welcomes its recommendations and recommends to the Government to implement the same at an early date."

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Amendments moved:

(1) That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission is of the opinion that early steps should be taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission, particularly the recommendations relating to—

- (a) minimum wages and other conditions of service of working journalists;
- (b) promotion of the growth of small, medium and independent papers through such measures as introduction of price-page schedule, import of news-print through state monopoly corporation and distribution of it at equated price to all newspapers;
- (c) adoption of a rational advertisement policy;
- (d) re-organisation of news agency; and
- (e) setting up of a Press Council at an early date."

(2) That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission is of opinion that early steps should be taken to implement all the recommendations of the Commission."

(3) That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission is of the opinion that immediate steps should be taken by Government to implement the recommendations of the Commission specially by—

- (a) fixing a minimum wage and regulating the other conditions of service as recommended by the Commission;

(b) bringing the newspaper industry under the control of the Centre;

(c) prohibiting the various restrictive and unfair practices in the industry and fixing a price-page schedule;

(d) transforming the ownership, structure and management of the P.T.I. and U.P.I. as recommended by the Commission;

(e) setting up of a Press Council with statutory protection to the Council against civil or criminal liability for its discussions or publications;

(f) undertaking of state trading corporation for importing newsprint and selling it at an equated price to all newspapers and periodicals; and

(g) undertaking the amendment of the various Press laws, as suggested by the Commission."

(4) That in the substitute motion proposed by Shri Thimmaiah, after part (e), the following new parts be added:

"(f) banning by law of cross-words and similar other prize competitions; and

(g) banning by law of objectionable advertisements."

(5) That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission, generally approves its recommendations and requests the Government to take steps to implement the same as early as possible."

(6) That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission welcomes the

Commission

Report and recommends to the Government its early implementation."

(7) That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission generally welcomes its recommendations and recommends to the Government to implement the same at an early date."

Shri V. V. Giri (Pathapatnam): I am grateful to you for the opportunity that has been afforded to me to take part in a most important debate relating to the findings of the Press Commission.

I will not be doing my duty if I do not refer to the very valuable services rendered by the late Rajadhyaksha in accepting the chairmanship of that illustrious Commission and in presenting the country with an illuminating document which is as useful as it is interesting. I had the great pleasure of associating myself with him for many years, because we both believed in the establishment of industrial peace and good industrial relations. He had the great knack of understanding the psychology and the attitude of the working class as well as employers.

Many a knotty labour problem and labour dispute could be settled by him giving satisfaction to both the parties concerned. I therefore appeal to the various industrial tribunals that exist in this country, arbitrators and negotiators in industrial disputes to follow his example and render similar service to the country.

I take this opportunity also of congratulating my esteemed friend Dr. Keskar on his ability, enthusiasm and wisdom in appointing a Commission of eminent men, eminent in the sense that they represented the industry, they represented the working journalists and that they represented the public opinion in this country. If I may say so, as an Englishman would

put it, 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating', and the report that has seen the light of day, and which but for their efforts would not have seen the light of day, is proof positive of the great work that they have done.

On all fundamental issues, I am glad to say that there has been great unanimity among the members of the Commission on important matters; and it is a matter for pride. I do not wish to name the individuals or give a description of their status. But everyone of us knows, and our country knows, the status that each member individually, and the Commission collectively, possessed.

I do not wish to waste the time of this House by going into the details of the different aspects that the hon. Minister has put forward, and which the Commission has dealt with in a very exhaustive manner. I am sure those who are interested in that report, those who are interested in the press and those who are interested in the working journalists must have gone into those matters. I shall therefore deal with more important matters rather than go into the details of those matters.

After all, the hon. Minister may succeed—and I am sure he will succeed—in getting legislation passed and in getting the conclusions of the Commission implemented. But it will be merely on paper if the employers on the one hand and the workers on the other do not realise their sense of responsibility in trying to see that the implementation is not only on paper but in actual fact, and that the result should be the establishment of the industry on a big basis, and the establishment of the rights of the workers, which they deserve—for, workers, especially in the press, have been suffering for long on account of the many grievances that they had faced all these years.

I had the pleasure of being a witness before the Commission as the Labour Minister at that time. They examined me for over two hours on various aspects of this matter, and I

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am therefore pleased to say not that my views are accepted *in toto* or anything of that kind, but that the conclusions that they have arrived at show what great weight they have given to the views of all the Ministers of Government representing the various aspects of the administration, the views expressed by the employers and the views expressed by the workers and so on.

They have dealt with problems relating to minimum wages, security of service, hours of employment, rest periods, provident fund, etc., and I think they have taken a very reasonable and just attitude from a practical point of view. No doubt, interested parties, whether they are employers or whether they are workers, are prepared, and will always be prepared, and ought to be prepared, to criticise the report because it has not satisfied them. But I do not countenance the misapprehensions that are raised in the minds of either the employers or the workers. It has always been the practice that whenever Government wanted to do some good turn to the workers by reducing the hours of work from 16 to 12, from 12 to 10, and from 10 to 8, the employers always said that production would fall down, that the industry will go to pieces and so on. Similarly, here I see that the employers are making a great case by saying that if the recommendations of this Commission are implemented, the industry will go to the dogs. They are entirely mistaken. Better wages, better conditions of service, if conceded to the workers, will result in better work being turned out, and better profits will also result for the benefit of the industry, for the benefit of the workers and also for the benefit of the country. The reports of the ILO tell us that as a result of the introduction of minimum wages in different countries, those industries where minimum wages have been introduced have not only fared better but produced greater profits. So, there is no use shutting our eyes to history. I want to tell

those who are the captains of industry not to be afraid of anything of the kind they fear. On the other hand, I say that if the recommendations of this Commission are implemented, it will result in greater benefit.

I want to tell Government not to be nervous about what these people or what those people will think, but immediately to put them into effect, and if necessary see that after five years another commission may come into existence to see the defects of it or the merits of it, and then to revise the decision if necessary. That is my request to the hon. Minister. As regards minimum wages and all that, I am told that there are some doubts about it. But I want to tell the hon. Minister not to entertain any of those doubts, but to go ahead with the support of the whole public opinion of this country, and the support of this House also. This is my first request to the hon. Minister.

Now, I would like to utter a note of warning both to the workers and to the employers. I take up the cudgel against the workers first. If the workers do not realise their sense of responsibility, they have no business to expect these conclusions to be put into effect, and even if they are put into effect, they will not succeed in getting anything either from the employers or from Government. I would like to tell the workers that they have to organise themselves in a sound and democratic manner with cent per cent membership in their unions, so that they may have sanctions behind their demands. At the same time, it must be their bounden duty to show courtesy and respect to their employers, and at the same time to take courtesy and respect from them. That is the first cardinal principal that I would like to put forward through you, Sir, to the workers who work in all industries and certainly in the press industry.

I would once again like to tell them the maxim which I have been repeating throughout, that there should be

one union in one industry, so that the employer may know with whom he has to deal, and who will be in a position to deliver the goods. The workers, on the other hand, must be careful to see that they run their unions in as sound a manner as the employer runs his office. Then alone, the employer will have respect for them. I would go a step further and say that in all unions, and especially in the press workers' union—for I am now talking about the press workers—they must have technical experts in the offices of their unions, so that the technical experts of the workers and the technical experts of the employers may meet from time to time and iron out differences regarding wages, service conditions and other matters, so that when the issues come up for final settlement, there may be a settlement across the table without strike or strife. These are some of the things that the workers have to understand if they have to gain the benefits of the recommendations that will be implemented through the efforts of our hon. Minister and the Government of India.

2 P.M.

On the other hand, I tell the employers that the workers are no longer hewers of wood and drawers of water, but that they are effective partners in the industry. I would go to this extent of saying that the workers are dominant partners in the industry with dominant responsibilities. The Press owner may put his money in the industry, but if the Press workers refuse to work, the industry will refuse to run. This is an aspect the employer must understand. After all, so far as the Press is concerned, who runs the Press industry? It is not the owner who puts his money, it is the Press workers, the editors, the sub-editors, the working journalists, the chaprasis—everybody else—who run it. Therefore, this aspect must be realised by the employer, who still thinks that he has a right to hire and fire, that the old principle, the hackneyed principle, of demand and supply still exists. All those he

must forget if he really wants that the industry should run in a proper manner, that he should secure profits out of the industry, that there should be cordial relations between workers and employer.

In these days, we find it has become almost a fashion to talk of a socialistic pattern of—society, and especially the capitalists are the foremost in talking about it; God knows, if they begin to talk of the socialistic pattern of society, what pattern it would be we have to think of. I would like also to tell the workers, especially in the Press, not to have any political affiliations, whether it is red, black, yellow, brown or white. It does not matter because so far as the Press is concerned, they have to take an impartial attitude on big issues and questions that arise from time to time, and they could do so most successfully if they do not have these political affiliations with any central organisation. That is one aspect of the thing, and I want to tell the workers about it. So far as the socialistic pattern of society is concerned, we have been talking a great deal about it. The Finance Minister has been talking about it, the Labour Minister has been talking about it....

An Hon. Member: Talking against it.

Shri V. V. Giri: Everyone is talking about it. My feeling is that is the socialistic pattern of society has to be introduced, if there should be partnership in industry, one thing has to be realised. After all, the workers expect that they are not mere slaves, they are not mere wage-earners, but they are important members of the community rendering service to the community by rendering their duty to the industry. In order to make them believe so, they must have a definite voice or control in the industrial system of the undertaking. And the time has come when we should implement this, if we mean what we say. I am glad the Prime Minister on return from Yugoslavia told us that in Yugoslavia, there the workers and the managements com-

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bine and work along with each other, and there is real partnership there. If that could be done there, I do not see any reason why it should not be done here. If any industry should be experimented upon, I would take the Press, because the editors, sub-editors and working journalists are the people really that run the industry. If they know the difficulties of the industry, if they know the difficulties of the financial structure of the industry, if they are properly taken into confidence, if they are shown the accounts in a proper manner, if the accounts are properly kept, then so far as the workers' part is concerned, they will be in a position to co-operate with the industry. Therefore, if we mean that the socialistic pattern of society should be introduced in the country, the socialistic pattern of society must lead to socialism; socialism must lead to a socialist State; the socialist State must lead to a classless society. Luckily for us, the Constitution has provided fundamental rights. The right to work, the right to live and all other social amenities which will give reasonable comfort to every man are guaranteed. But mere enunciation of those rights will not satisfy the common man, unless he is in a position to see that he can have those rights fulfilled. Therefore, instead of always going about lecturing on these matters, we should definitely feel that we must sit across the table and try to come to certain conclusions about not only the socialistic pattern of society but about the workers' voice in the control of the industrial system. I do feel that if the matter is rightly approached and the workers and employers could meet on right lines without 'ifs' and 'buts', there is hope of even having an industrial truce for some time so that the Second Five Year Plan may succeed, and the rights and privileges of the workers may not be interfered in any manner.

Therefore, so far as this Report is concerned, my request to the hon.

Minister will be to see that it is implemented in respect of all the conclusions that have been given to us and the country by the Press Commission. We could certainly revise our decisions, if necessary. I can assure the employers that they need not be afraid. I did assure the bankers that they need not be afraid if the Bank Award was put into effect. I am certain that if this is put into effect, it would not affect the industry adversely; on the other hand, the more you pay, the more you deal with the workers as partners, the better will be the profit, the better will be the industry and better will be the country. I do not wish to take more time of the House. There are many Members who have studied the different aspects of this Report and I am sure we will all be benefited, and the country will be benefited, by their observations.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy (Mysore): May I just move my amendment?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. member was late. I will allow it as an exception.

Shri Kamath (Hoshangabad): Exception?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: When I called him, he was not here and I am not bound to place it before the House. I hope the House will pardon him for having been absent.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission, is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission, particularly the recommendations relating to—

- (a) amelioration of the conditions of the working journalists in respect of pay, promotion, leave and security of service;

- (b) setting up of a Press Council, with statutory protection and powers and charged with the duties to safeguard the freedom of the Press, to ensure high standards of public taste and regulate the conduct of the Press by formulation of a code of journalistic ethics, and to improve the methods of recruitment, education and training for the profession;
- (c) reorganization of the ownership, structure, management and finances of the newspaper industry;
- (d) introduction of price-page schedule to eliminate price-cutting competition of big papers;
- (e) setting up of advertising Council consisting of newspapers, advertising agencies, advertisers and Government representatives to advise on the ethics of advertising, and to organise market research and to carry on readership survey;
- (f) establishment of a state trading corporation to handle newsprint;
- (g) setting up of a public corporation to take over the P.T.I.; and
- 'h) reorganisation of news agencies."

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Amendment moved:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted:

"This House having taken into consideration the Report of the Press Commission, is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission, particularly the recommendations relating to—

- (a) amelioration of the conditions of the working journalists in respect of pay, promotion, leave and security of service;
- (b) setting up of a Press Council, with statutory protection and powers and charged with the duties to safeguard the freedom of the Press, to ensure high

standards of public taste and regulate the conduct of the Press by formulation of a code of journalistic ethics, and to improve the methods of recruitment, education and training for the profession;

- (c) reorganization of the ownership, structure, management and finances of the newspaper industry;
- (d) introduction of price-page schedule to eliminate price-cutting competition of big papers;
- (e) setting up of advertising Council consisting of newspapers, advertising agencies, advertisers and Government representatives to advise on the ethics of advertising, and to organise market research and to carry on readership survey;
- (f) establishment of a state trading corporation to handle newsprint;
- (g) setting up of a public corporation to take over the P.T.I.; and
- (h) reorganisation of news agencies."

Acharya Kripalani (Bhagalpur cum Purnea): I endorse what has been said by the hon. Minister and Shri V. V. Giri about the Chairman of the Press Commission and its learned members. They have given us a lengthy document in three volumes. One volume consists of more than 500 pages. They have passed in review, all the matters connected with the organisation of the Press in a democracy, how it should function, what should be its duties and obligations. It is not possible for me to do justice to this comprehensive document in the small time at my disposal. I will, therefore, confine myself to a few topics, and these will be: the organisation of the industry and the news agencies, the condition of the working journalists, the undesirable influences exercised, whether by the Government administration, the advertisers or by political and social pressure groups, and last of all—the most important thing—the organisation of a Press Council which the Commission has recommended.

[Acharya Kripalani]

The Commission has told us about the origin of the Press in India. There are some here present who have seen the origins of the Press in India, its development and its present deplorable condition. The Press in India originated with the idea of social reform, religious reform, economic and political reform, and all the great names of the makers of modern India are associated with the Press before independence—not after independence—beginning from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, Tilak, Bipinchandra Pal, Lajpat Rai, Gandhiji...

An Hon. Member: And yourself.

Acharya Kripalani... Aurobindo Ghose, Subash Chandra Bose, C. R. Das...

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon): Acharya Kripalani.

Acharya Kripalani... Motilal Nehru and our present Prime Minister, and poet Rabindranath Tagore...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: And the mover.

Acharya Kripalani... of course all before independence—all great men. It is very strange that we should have produced all these great men while we were in slavery and, when free, I am afraid, we have produced only pygmies.

Shri S. S. More (Sholapur): So should we pray for slavery more?

Acharya Kripalani: I think, sometimes, it is the strain of circumstances that produces great men. Now, we seem to be without that strain, without any strain at all,—having left everything to one individual. It is only when people take up responsibilities and there is strain that the best in them comes out. I am sorry to make this remark because of the interruption.

I was saying that all the makers of modern India before independence were associated with the Press, not

indirectly but absolutely directly. All the names that I have mentioned here had organised newspapers. The newspaper industry was not then an industry; it was a national, philanthropic activity; it was a missionary activity. It began like that, and some of the newspapers running today as proprietary concerns made most of their money when we were fighting the British. At that time they had to pass very anxious days. To be associated with the Press then meant that the press may be confiscated at any time and the proprietor may be marched off to jail on the slightest pretext.

How did the Press function in those days? The reader of the newspaper was behind the Press, the public was behind the Press. There was no question of big money as no big money was required; and there was no advertisement in those days. All the advertisements went to what was called the Anglo-Indian Press. The Indian Press had very, very little to advertise in those days. And yet the Press did prosper and did fulfil the services that were required of it, that were expected of it. And, what is the position of the Press today? It has come into the hands of what are called the 'Press Barons'. I will leave it to Prof. Mukerjee to use a more forceful and colourful expression for 'Press Barons'; but I satisfy myself saying that today the Press is under the 'Press Barons', and it is conducted as any other industry. It is natural for things have changed, the conditions have changed and with these the technology and the economics under which the Press functions. Some kind of industrialisation was inevitable, was necessary and was required by the times. But, the industrialisation of the Press that has taken place in India is of a very peculiar character. Why some people have thought it proper to earn their money from the Press, is hard to understand. When there is cement, when there is textile industry, when there is steel, when there are motor

cars and everything else why do the industrialists invade this field? They do only because it gives them some prestige in the political field and the social field. (*Interruption*). They have no other motive in starting presses and papers. They argue, they are getting money from all sorts of quarters; why then not from this? They get social and political prestige. Then it helps them to advertise their other industries. We have thus cartels and monopolies in the Press. This monopoly is supposed to be the Fourth Estate in democracy. It passes one's comprehension, as to who are to be the teachers of the rising generation, the future generation, those who are interested in money-making! A centralised industry under a capitalist regime always loses its fundamental social character; as soon as any activity, any production comes under the sway of big industry the social purpose is altogether lost. What remains is the making of money, because money is the only value that is left in a capitalist society. It gives power, it gives honour, it gives everything. It can even make idiots writers. I have seen that because people have money they think they are connoisseurs of art; they purchase objects of art which they do not even comprehend. Even our spiritual life is invaded by married people. If the Ramakrishna Society wants funds, to whom does it go? To those who have collected money from the black market. Thus they become our spiritual leaders and philanthropists. They also help schools and colleges. Thus in a capitalist society, everything is connected with money, and the social purpose of everything is altogether lost.

I will now describe to you the condition of Press as given by the Press Commission:

"The status and the role of working journalists"—it is talking of these journalists because they have to work under the capitalist barons—"has undergone change in many directions. Formerly, most of the Indian Press had only one objective and that was the political emancipation of the

country. Most of the journalists of that era were actuated by fervent patriotism and a feeling that they had a mission to perform and a message to convey."

I wonder what message the present 'press barons' have to convey to us.

Shri S. S. More: More and more money.

Acharya Kripalani: Political independence having been achieved, emphasis has now shifted and newspapers are not conducted as a mission but have become mainly commercial ventures. The moral and intellectual leadership which used to be associated with the journalists of former days is not being maintained at the same level. The calibre of the person attached to this profession has not, therefore, naturally been of the high standard as in the past. This is the result of bringing capitalism and industrialism in a profession which is supposed to help democracy and to educate the people! This is also clear from the way the capitalist Press in general has accorded reception to the report of the Press Commission,—not only the Press but also the news agencies—because news agencies are controlled by the barons of the Press. Many things in the report that would be useful for the public were blacked out completely. No mention was made of the conditions of the Press as described in the report. Some papers have given quotations here and there, but generally the Press, as a whole, has blacked out the report, excepting for purposes of criticism and on those points where their own financial interests were involved. This is how the Press Commission's report has been treated by the monopolistic industry! This monopoly is kept in the hands of Press barons. As with every other monopoly, it arises with the strangling of small competitors. The capitalists have very effectively strangled the small competitors. Another thing is that big business prospers by the exploitation of the workers. There has been a great exploitation of the workers and the condition of the

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working journalists is absolutely pitiable. They do not get enough to maintain themselves. How are they to keep up their knowledge? A journalist requires a fair knowledge of what is happening in the world. If he cannot eat his food, how can he purchase a book or even a journal? There are no libraries; there are no reference books. The whole wage-earning population in the Press is being exploited from day to day.

Let us now see how small competitors are eliminated. By getting combined services for the chains of papers; this is economical, because the staff that is required for combined newspapers is the very staff that is required for a single newspaper. Then the big chains of papers purchase in a lump sum their newsprint. Not only they purchase but, you will be surprised to know, they go and corner the market and then dole out newsprint to other papers.

Shri Asoka Mehta (Bhandara): They alone can import newsprint into the country; nobody else.

Acharya Kripalani: Because we have a socialistic pattern of society and the Government must naturally help them! What do they do to eliminate competition? They reduce the price of paper to below even the producing cost. What do they give? They give waste paper. One news baron announced recently that it will be very advantageous to purchase such and such paper because the return one gets from waste paper gives back as much money as is spent on the paper.

Then they get advertisements for the chain papers. They will not accept advertisements separately for each paper. Their original paper may be popular, but an unpopular paper which has recently been started by them should be tacked on to the former. This is how they oblige the advertisers to give them their advertisements.

Then they have got combined accounts. Supposing one paper in Calcutta is running at a great profit. Then they would start another paper in Delhi; and what happens? If it does not run at a profit, but runs at a loss after two or three years, and all of a sudden they close it up.....

Shri Asoka Mehta: That comes out of income-tax.

Acharya Kripalani: That also is done. Recently, some three papers were closed in Calcutta. What happens to the working journalists and the other employees, nobody cares. Some more papers because of the Press Commission's report will be closed up—not because the Press barons are not making money, but because they are losing something somewhere and they do not want to have any loss anywhere. They keep combined accounts, as my friend Shri Asoka Mehta said,—and he knows better than myself, being associated in Bombay with many of these people—to cheat the income-tax authorities.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Can the newspaper industry be nationalised?

Acharya Kripalani: If nationalisation means governmentalisation, I say God save us. But there are many meanings given to the word 'nationalisation'. If it means that it really comes under the control of the nation,—that means, the people,—then nothing will be more desirable.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Then there is no meaning in saying that the socialistic pattern of society will apply to this. It can be a co-operative concern.

Acharya Kripalani: Co-operative concern is a socialistic conception. The remedies suggested by the Press Commission are that the units must be separated. I think it is necessary for the employees, whether on the managerial and technical side or editorial side. Then, the accounts should

be kept separately and that would also help the income-tax department. They have another suggestion and that is the price-page schedule. I do not know why it has been opposed by the big papers. During the war when this system was adopted, they were getting greater profits than ever before. I am not very sure if this price-page schedule would not again give them greater profits. There are papers now,—English daily papers,—that are selling for one anna, and they usually give about eight pages. If the price-page schedule is adopted,—as it is being said one pice per page,—they will have either to reduce their space to four pages or to increase the price. I do not like that the price of cheap newspapers should increase. Therefore, I would suggest that no daily newspaper should sell for more than two annas, which the owners will do even in their own interests. One-anna paper should give not more than six pages and a two anna paper should give a maximum of ten pages—the maximum may be fixed. Anyway, this question requires a little more detailed study and I think that before any steps are taken, this study will be carried out. I do not want that people be denied enough matter as cheaply as possible; our lower middle classes, for instance, in Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi, that is, every clerk must have his newspaper and it must be possible for him to get a newspaper for one anna, which also he can hardly afford. This paper must have sufficient matter also. I think about six pages will be quite good for a one-anna paper and about 10 pages for a two-anna paper. We must prescribe a maximum for the number of pages and not allow beyond that to be used as waste paper. The Press Commission have also suggested that the space for advertisement should not be more than 40 per cent. I should have thought that this is big enough. After all, we are dealing with a report of a learned committee. The more learned a committee is, more conservative are its views; generally it is so. The recommendations they

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have made are very moderate indeed. So also are moderate the recommendations that they have made with regard to a public trading corporation for newsprint. This is a very valuable suggestion, considering the fact that big business has been making money from newsprint. It is said that some kind of a company was floated—I do not know how many years back—in Madhya Pradesh (the Nepa Mills); I do not know what happened to it in between. It is said to be again reviving after four or five years and it has gone into production. But it cannot produce our entire requirements of newsprint. We have to import from outside for some time to come and in order to equalise the prices between what we produce and what we import from outside, it is necessary to have this public trading corporation which must give newspaper equitably to all the newspapers, big and small.

There are no district papers in our country. This is because of the capitalist monopoly that exists. As a matter of fact, in all the European democratic countries, there are very good district papers. They get district advertisements and they exist because of these advertisements and their circulation. But here there are no daily papers in the districts. The big papers in big cities, metropolitan cities, cover up all small towns. They have their agencies and they have the ways and means of canvassing the market. I think this is a very good suggestion that there must be a State trading newsprint corporation which will equalise the prices of newsprint.

But I do not like that there should be a cess imposed upon newsprint, as has been suggested by the Commission—a cess of about Rs. 10 per ton. This they want to utilise for the expenses of the Press Council. I think, to begin with, Government should bear the expenses of the Press Council and there should be no burden put upon newsprint.

Then we come to the news agencies. There are two news agencies here in India—the P.T.I. and the U.P.I.—there

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is one Hindustan Press also. But the first two are the main news agencies. How they are conducted is well known to everybody, because the employees of the P.T.I. did advertise the conditions of the working of the P.T.I. very successfully. That was the one good thing that came out of their agitation—we have come to know how much capital these Press barons, invested in taking over this agency and how much money they have borrowed, how much money they were giving to their creditors, and at what rates they were getting their own news supplied to them. In this the remarks of the Commission are very revealing. The Commission opined:

"From a study of the budgets and statements of revenue and expenditure of the Press Trust of India, it is also clear that where certain directors are concerned, the Press Trust of India has allowed relaxation of rules regarding collection of subscriptions, thus giving them a financial advantage over others who regularly pay their subscriptions and satisfy their commitments to the Press Trust of India. While granting credit to the directors, we find that the Press Trust of India at the same time had to incur commitments in respect of its overdraft accounts with banks. We are surprised that this procedure should have been followed by the directors who ought to have set a higher standard in their dealings with the organisation. (Higher standard from capitalists!) On the 28th February, 1954, the total outstanding from newspapers considered good for recovery exceeded Rs. 3½ lakhs. This is surprising when the rules require that all payments of subscription should be made in advance of the period to which it refers. Out of this sum, an amount of Rs. 66,000 was outstanding from directors of the Press Trust of India. (They are very good trustees!!) Suits have

been filed in respect of another of Rs. 30,000 where the chances of recovering the sum were not so bright. In addition a sum of over Rs. 90,000 has had to be written off as irrecoverable."

Further, it is said:

"An allegation was made that one of the Directors had been availing himself of the 'A' service while paying only for the 'B' service. This was admitted by the other Directors, but the gentleman concerned tried to bluster his way out of answering questions we put to him and had to be asked to withdraw. (This was the only occasion in the whole of the inquiry when we had to ask a witness to withdraw.)"

These gentlemen are to train us in democracy!

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Possibly, that is what he wanted—to get out of the place.

Acharya Kripalani: Of course—naturally, he wanted, because he did not want to give evidence.

"Another Director, who published multiple editions of his paper (printed in the form of supplements at centres other than the one in respect of which a subscription was being paid to the Press Trust of India) had not been charged for these supplements and the other Directors had overlooked the matter. We consider it undesirable that a Director should be in charge of the day to day working of the agency." घर का मामला है।

Then there is something about the United Press of India, which in the pre-independence days did render us signal service. I wish it had continued as of old. But what does the Press Commission say?

"The United Press of India is a public limited company. Some of the proprietors of newspapers are directors of this company. In

our opinion, this form of management is not desirable in the case of a news agency of national importance."

Therefore, the Commission has rightly recommended that the entire responsibility for the management of the news agencies should be organised on the basis of public corporations and entrusted to boards of trustees. Whether this will be done or not has got to be seen, because it rests entirely in the hands of the P.T.I. and the U.P.I. and the Commission has not suggested any legislative measures by which its wishes could be given effect to. It is only a pious hope and I am afraid it will remain a pious hope and no public corporations would be formed.

How these agencies have been carrying out their work has also been given in the report—so far as coverage of news is concerned, so far as sending news from India is concerned. The latter is simply thrown away; it is not utilised at all. It is necessary there must be more than one organisation for the foreign news coverage. Such organisation must not solely rely upon England for their news. They must have special correspondents of their own.

About the working journalists, I have already said what their condition is. They cannot perform the delicate task of enlightening the country if they are subject to financial stresses. The Commission has suggested a minimum wage of Rs. 125. This basic pay is not very high. In cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Delhi, they have recommended that an additional allowance of Rs. 100 should be paid. So also some additional allowances should be paid in cities which have a population of more than seven lakhs and more than one lakh. Other amenities have also been recommended.

Generally at present the editor and other members of the editorial staff are employed without being given a

letter of appointment. They are appointed and displaced whenever the proprietor thinks it fit. No notice is given. Maybe there is one month's notice. Those dismissed belong to a learned profession and its members find it difficult to find jobs as easily as household servants. Sometimes their dues are not paid. The Commission has made recommendations for their recruitment, training, apprenticeship, emoluments, promotion, retirement, gratuity, provident fund, leave and hours of work. In this industry all these things have never been done. It is for the first time that the Press Commission has drawn the attention of the country and of the Government in these directions. They have also suggested provision of other facilities—for instance, libraries, reference books, retiring rooms and travel—whether Indian or foreign.

The Commission has referred to the difference between those working for journals in Indian languages and those in the English language and has recommended that this difference must be obliterated. It is suggested that the papers in the Indian languages are not able to make enough money to meet both their ends. But if they are to serve the country and serve democracy, it is better that such papers as cannot pay their staff properly shut shop. But I am sure that when they give proper emoluments to their employees, especially the editorial staff, they would be able to command a better market and will be able to make both ends meet.

The Press Commission has also defined the position of the editor. Every paper has a basic policy and the editor is bound to act in accordance with that basic policy. But this basic policy must be stated in the appointment letter itself so that the editor knows where he stands. Today nothing of the sort is done. From time to time editors are given instructions to do this and that and if they do not, they have got to go. The Commission has given many examples where the editors had to walk out.

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I am sorry that by and large editors also have made themselves the instruments of their employers. They have sold their ability. A few have made a stand but many of them have given their abilities to be exploited by the capitalists. So, rightly the Commission says that so far as editorial staff is concerned, the editor must always be consulted in appointments, in punishments, in dismissal and all other things.

The Commission talks of the influences that are working today in the Press. The greatest influence is our benign Government. It controls only seven per cent of the advertisements. Yet this quantity is consolidated. The Government and the administration have hundred ways by which they can influence the Presses. Then every Government Department has got a publicity section of its own and the Press is given ready-made matter to be published. The Commission says that most of these hand-outs are generally concerned with the advertisement of particular individuals in the Government. The resources on which these communiques are based are never told to the Press nor is the Press allowed to enquire about these. Then there are the repressive laws hanging over the Press. Recently we changed our Penal Code and gave a new definition to defamation. So far as the members of our services are concerned, they are not common citizens; they are extra-ordinary citizens. They should not be treated as their masters are. The people in a democracy are the masters of the administration but the administrator here is treated differently from the citizens. If the offices are defamed they have not to go to courts. We know why they are reluctant to go to courts. They know that if they go some other scandals might be exposed. So, they do not go to the courts for the redress of the wrong done to them and Government comes to their help. Formerly, even under the foreign Government, if an administra-

tor was defamed he had to defend himself and if he was successful the money spent in the defamation case was borne by the Government. Why this new provision should have been made in the Penal Code is difficult to understand.

Shri Kamath: Equality before the law!

Acharya Kripalani: It is not equality; it is inequality before law. The most obnoxious Act that was passed by the British Government was about the Press objectionable matter. You, Sir, are old enough to know what agitation was raised when this Act was passed by the foreign Government. You also know—many of the older Members of the House must be knowing—how on very flimsy grounds security deposits were asked from the Press and how they were confiscated. The Press in those days had to appeal to the public to give them money for fresh deposits to keep alive. I remember the *National Herald* lost its security several times. This *National Herald* was connected with our present Prime Minister. I know very well what he felt at that time about this Press (Objectionable Matter) Act but I do not know what he feels now. Of course, responsibility weighs heavy, so heavy on some of us that we forget our past.

I have one thing more to say and that is about the Press Council. It is very necessary. Every profession has a council. Why not the Press have a council of its own? About the duties it will have to perform the Commission says:

"The best way of maintaining professional standards in journalism would be to bring into existence a body of people principally connected with the industry whose responsibility it would be to arbitrate on doubtful points and to censure any one guilty of infraction of the Code. An All-India Press Council with statutory protection and powers

should, therefore, be set up and charged with the duties: to safeguard the freedom of the Press..."

This is not only against the mercantile community, not only against the capitalists and the pressure groups but also against the Government:

"...to help the Press to maintain its independence, to ensure high standards of public taste and regulate the conduct of the Press by formulation of a code of journalistic ethics to be followed by all, to keep under review any developments likely to restrict supply and dissemination of views of public interest and importance, to improve the methods of recruitment, education and training for the profession, if necessary for the creation of agencies like the Press Institute, to deal with complaints about the conduct of the Press, to promote technical and other research, to publish annual reports recording its working and performance of the Press, to review the ownership structure etc. etc."

It is also said:

"The Press Council should consist of persons who will command the general confidence and respect of the profession and should have 25 members...."

It is said that out of these, 13 should be from the profession. But, "from the profession" should not—may I tell the authorities who are to appoint these people—mean the new kind of human beings that have sprung up in the Press. They are called the managing editors who neither do managing nor editing; but they do plenty of damaging. This new creation—I do not know wherefrom it came and from whose brain-wave it originated—should not be exclusively represented on this council as it is on the All-India Editors' Conference.

There is some talk of the Yellow Press. The Yellow Press is of two

kinds. One that maligns the Government and the other that maligns individuals. Well, those individuals who are maligning will take care of themselves. However, something should be done even for them too. So far as maligning of the Government is concerned, I am afraid, it is due to the fact that the capitalist Press does not give enough news about the misdeeds of high officials. The Yellow Press sometimes exposes the doings of high authority—whether in commerce, industry or in Government. Let the ordinary Press give news about the scandals that go on from day to day in high quarters and then the Yellow Press will disappear. I am sure that much of the news this variety of Press gives, is not correct and is maliciously false. However, I have not seen even a single occasion where the Government have prosecuted a paper for maligning an innocent authority. Why does not the Government launch prosecution in such cases? I have been wondering why, when manifestly wrong and malicious information has been given in the Press, the Government sit silent? It raises a suspicion in the public mind that the Government are afraid that if it went to the court some other scandal might come out. If the Government want to tackle the Yellow Press they can do so only by allowing the ordinary Press to ventilate freely the grievances of the people against the Government.

Shri Raghuramalah: I have moved an amendment approving generally the recommendations of the Press Commission, not from the point of view of any 'ism' but purely from the point of view of an average citizen. The average citizen is not interested in any 'ism' as such. What he wants is straight objective news; news which is given as cheap as possible; news from an industry which does justice to the workers, gives them a share in the administration and control and a system which will help the smaller newspapers and newspapers that have come newly into the field to prosper under conditions which do not throttle

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them on account of competition from large vested interests.

Judging the report from this point of view I think it must be admitted that there has not been a more satisfactory report than this. Of the various reports which have been given within recent years there has not been a report more approved in general by the public and in respect of which every person has been most anxious that the Government should implement, than the report presented by the Press Commission.

One particular feature of this report which I would specially commend, and which I am sure everybody in this House commends, is the thought it has given to the working journalists both in respect of wages and in respect of the rightful share which they should have in the industry. I remember, recently, a gentleman who was very vociferous in commending, when the question of land reform was taken up, that land should go to the tiller, the same gentleman protesting, privately of course, against the increased wages and the share in the P.T.I. recommended to be given to the working journalists. He said that the whole report is coloured and that it contained nothing but what should be done to the working journalists whether in the Press, or P.T.I. management. Then I asked him: "You shouted high and mighty when it was a question of giving proper share to the tiller of the soil. You wanted land to be given to the tiller. Why do you not want the working journalists, who give the very substance to the newspaper, to have a share in its control and administration?" There was no answer and there could be no answer. The peculiar feature of every vested interest is that it will be very socialistic, very democratic and very altruistic when it does not touch its pocket.

As I said, Sir, if there is one point on which I think there is complete

unanimity in the country, a point to which special attention has been given in this report, it is that working journalists should be given a living wage. You cannot have any happy working journalist hovering around having a miserable life. It will not contribute to healthy news. It will not contribute to fair journalism. It will not contribute to the peace and prosperity of this country. I have discussed this with many people. I have discussed this even with some of the Press barons and nobody except, as I said, that particular gentleman who was very vociferous that the land should go to the tiller, had the courage to say that this particular recommendation should not be implemented.

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Therefore, I shall not take much time of this House in commending the minimum wages and also the various terms and conditions of service recommended by the Commission. We must surely render minimum justice to this class of workers.

I am very glad that the contribution made by the working journalists has also been recognised in other ways. The report has recommended a certain proportion for them both in the constitution of the Press Council and in the reorganisation of the P.T.I. I agree to the reorganisation of the P.T.I. because I consider, judging from the standard to which I referred at the outset of my speech, that an average citizen is not satisfied with the present situation. It is but fair and proper that the P.T.I. should be reorganised. In saying that, I am not one of those who are prepared to denounce every director or the present directors. It is not my concern to do so. I judge it by an objective standard. Why should dissemination of news, which is shared not only by newspapers but even by the All-India Radio which relies on, acts on and proceeds on that news, be in the hands of a few people however much money they might have contributed? I can

never understand that. It is a national urgency that the dissemination of news should not be in the hands of a few people. It should be done by a Trust and that is what the Press Commission has recommended. There may be differences of view as to how this Trust should be constituted and how it should be administered. I myself have not been quite able to appreciate the manner of composition which has been recommended by the Press Commission. But that is a matter of detail. For instance, I would not myself like to entrust the nomination of the entire body of the members of this Trust to the Chief Justice. As in certain other countries, I would like to see that the representatives of the workers' organisations are elected by the workers' organisations, that the representatives of the proprietors are elected by the proprietors and certain non-journalistic elements are represented by certain other organisations. I would like it to be a representative house selected by the process of election and not entirely to be left to the Chief Justice. But, anyhow, that is a matter of detail. I quite see that the Commission has not recommended a legislative machinery to enforce the scheme. But then we forget that the Commission have tied it up with certain financial recommendations. They have made these to support the P.T.I. for instance they have recommended that the A.I.R.'s contribution should be increased and they have also recommended that the teleprinter machines should be taken over by the Government and be paid for. They have also recommended a long-term loan by the Government. Ultimately, the P.T.I. will have to depend on financial assistance, however direct or indirect, from the Government, and the Government have a voice in it. They can tell the directors of the P.T.I. that unless "you carry out this measure we are not prepared to help you as the Commission has recommended". I am sure even the directors of the P.T.I., given some time, will see the justice of the case and I am sure it is not a profit-making concern. Even now, I am told they are not

taking away dividends for the money they have invested. It is treated as on a non-profit basis. Of course there is a report that they have been getting an indirect profit by getting more service, in certain cases, for less money paid. For instance, I am told that in Poona, a scheduled paper gets the same kind of service for Rs. 750 while in a district paper in Kolhapur or Sholapur, a paper has to pay Rs. 1,000 for the same news. There has not been any rational service. I am told they charge according to their whims and fancies, sometimes high and sometimes low. I suppose people who paid for B class service were getting A class service. Of course, it is now said that all this has been rectified, but I do not want the service to be at the mercy of the whims and fancies of a few owners of the Press. Therefore, the Government should make it clear to them. Of course it can only be done with the co-operation of the Press. The proprietors of newspapers, I am sure, are patriotic enough if the Government calls them and explains the situation to them. Of course, in the beginning there may be a little heart-burning. Heart-burning is inevitable, but ultimately, I am sure, they will accept the recommendations of the Commission with such modifications as the Government may feel fit to make.

There has also been a good deal of criticism regarding the price-page schedule. One gentleman was telling me the other day, "If I want to give you 20 pages of news for one anna, why should I be prevented from doing so?" I do not quite mind getting 20 pages of news for one anna, but what kind of news? Is it astrological forecast? Is it cross-word puzzle or is it one of the various competitions, quite apart from advertisements? And what about advertisements even? There are pages after pages of advertisements. I do not know how many of my friends here read the advertisements published in the newspapers, except perhaps in a Sunday paper. Probably when a gentleman has no work on

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a Sunday, he might devote a few minutes to the advertisements, but normally, nobody has got time enough to go through the advertisements. Advertisement is not news. That is not the purpose of a newspaper.

Dr. Keskar: Who told you that twenty pages of news are sold for one anna?

Shri Raghuramaiah: The hon. Minister is asking that question. I say that that is the kind of promise they make. Their object is more than what one thinks. It is to kill the smaller papers by catering to a class of readers. They are not for an intelligent reader, not for a class reader, but for the type of reader, who, I dare say, is carried away by bulk. If he gets 10 pages of a newspaper for one anna, he would prefer to have it instead of having a smaller paper of four pages for the same amount. Of course there is the other suggestion that we should allow only 40 per cent. of the space for advertisements. It may be that we can have a rule that either a paper will have 40 per cent. for advertisements or a certain number of pages whichever is lower. These are matters to be worked out, and in any case, as in the case of the P.T.I. or in the case of the price-page schedule also, this is a matter in which the Government will have to take the newspaper industry into confidence. The principle that there must be a price-page schedule having been accepted, the actual schedule, the rates, and the manner of working them out will have to be undoubtedly settled by the Government and certainly the entire newspaper industry has to be taken into confidence.

• Somebody was saying with reference to this that this is a violation of article 19 (1) of the Constitution, which relates to freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Well, there is no limit to that kind of observation. You can stretch the law; you can retract the law, but the spirit of the Constitution is a thing

which we will have to bear in mind and the spirit of the Constitution is not that the smaller men should have no place in this world; it is not that the smaller papers should be driven out of the market. The spirit of the Constitution is that there must be equality of opportunity for all. We must judge it in the light of these principles. Some of my friends on the other side, while I am saying this, are laughing in their sleeves. But let them remember that the defence of the small men is not their privilege only. After the socialistic revolution, we are committed to save the small men and it is the privilege and duty of all of us to fight for the poor, to fight for the weak and to fight, in this particular case, for the smaller papers in the newspaper sphere.

I would next draw the attention of the House to two or three more aspects, particularly, the contents of newspapers: Cross-word puzzle has become a scandal. In fact, it has become the sole source of attraction in the case of some papers. Here, I may frankly tell you that some years back I used to purchase a paper only for the sake of the cross-word puzzle, and I had never the time, nor the patience nor the desire to look into the rest of that paper then.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Let the hon. Member get a prize.

Shri Raghuramaiah: If I get a prize I would share the amount with my friends. If every person who participates gets a prize, we need not grumble. But the point is millions and millions of people are ruined and it happens that a person, who sometimes does not exist, gets a prize, and except through the advertisement in that paper, nobody knows whether such a person exists at all. I hope that that man does exist—the elusive pim-pernel. That is one thing which must be stopped if healthy journalism is to be developed and if people are not to be exploited.

The other thing is astrological forecast. It is terrible, especially the matrimonial forecast. I do not know how many people have died of heart failure on reading them. You open a page and see that a person with such and such stars is sure to be married. God alone knows when the marriage would come off. A man goes on spending hundreds of rupees to find this out. Then, there is the *kavacham*. I do not know how many souls have suffered, not by the weight of wearing the *kavachams*, but by the weight of the money paid. It will make old people young and young people old; all sorts of things are said. There seems to be no limit. I sometimes wonder whether it is not time that all these things are stopped. I am very glad that the Press Commission has supported the proposal that that kind of stuff should get out of our newspapers and that the papers should have a more healthy trend.

I would only say this that in making these observations, I am not guided by any sense of 'ism'. I leave that to other men more competent. I want a paper for the layman, a healthy paper with straight news and a society in which the small paper also can thrive side by side with a bigger paper. The monopoly of the bigger paper will have to be stopped if it is going to work havoc on the smaller paper. I am one of those who believe that the price-page schedule will contribute to remove the unhealthy competition and will place the small paper on its own footing. I strongly commend the recommendations in the report. I would particularly compliment the two Members of Parliament, Shri T. N. Singh and Shri Jaipal Singh, who were members of this Commission. They have done yeoman's service and we are proud that they have been associated with such a historic document.

Shri Joachim Alva (Kanara): The golden age of Indian Journalism is over. The golden age of when toil, and tears, the sweat and blood in the shape of confiscations, arrests for sedi-

tion and other penalties of the British Raj that were so profuse in our land, is now over. The materialistic age has dawned on us when a spirit of mission has yielded place to commission! Mission has gone; commission has come. It is so unfortunate that it has come after 1947 when the golden age of Indian journalism came to an end.

My hon. friend Acharya Kripalani mentioned a host of names who have been associated with the golden age of Indian journalism. I would like him not to forget two other names, though they were foreigners: Mrs. Annie Besant and Benjamin Guy Horniman. Both of them had contributed so much towards the spirit of freedom in Indian journalism. Though both of them were foreigners, they made this land a part of their life. Now, Indian journalism has been invaded by the Vandals, the Huns, the Scythians and dacoits. I do not know how it has gone into the evidence here, one of our press lords, the biggest press lord, says that he has committed every crime short of murder. The Chairman asked him, do you mean to say that you have committed dacoity. They took him seriously and also with a tinge of humour. He said, yes, I have committed almost all crimes except murder. With this brazen-facedness, with this kind of men who try to control the destinies of our nation, and monopolise and concentrate newspaper policy in their hands, what is going to be the future of our land? This is what the Commission has striven its utmost to do: to clip their wings, and to do the right thing at the right time. Incidentally, I must pay a tribute to the hon. Prime Minister who, in the debate on the First Amendment of the Constitution, spontaneously and readily agreed that there shall be a commission to examine the entire press position by a set of eminent men. He was followed up, no doubt, by the hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Dr. Keskar, who promptly and efficiently brought into being the machinery of the Commission. Thereafter, we had

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two terrible casualties in the Commission. Shri Chowla who died fighting at the height of his hard work, who died of heart failure and justice Rajadhyaksha. I saw him a few days before he fell at the end of his labours after a happy life. A few days later, I learnt to my horror that he had died. The Prime Minister is the progenitor of the Commission; the nourisher is the hon. Minister Dr. Keskar. These two were the casualties. But, there are going to be a number of other casualties as a result of the recommendations of the Commission.

An Hon. Member: Who are they?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Recommendations or implementation?

Shri Joachim Alva: Recommendations.

We must go back to the U.K. Royal Commission. That was appointed in 1952 as a result of a debate in the House of Commons in which journalist Members took part. The National Union of Journalists took the initiative in demanding a Commission. It is rather ironical that the journalist Members of Parliament oppose the appointment of the Commission. By a free vote of 272 to 157, the motion for the appointment of the Commission was passed in the British House of Commons. The Commission which was appointed in October, 1952, finished their labours in July 1954, after 2 years. They had 17 members, of whom two were women, one being Lady Bonham Carter, daughter of Mr. Asquith, a former Prime Minister in England. Ten eminent men were appointed by our hon. Minister. I do not see the reason why he did not find a single woman to grace this Commission. As I said, the initiative of demanding an enquiry by a Press Commission was that of the Union of National Journalists.

There are 5 important recommendations, according to me, in this report. You have to link them up. All the recommendations are linked up. If you de-link them, they will fall

as a pack of cards. This is a voluminous report. With due respect to the report issued in the U.K., I say this is more voluminous. I only wish that it was printed better, with fine letters as fine as is found in communications from the House of Commons. I wish even the writer was a different man in the sense, a man who has seen with his own eyes the scorched-earth policy of the Quit India Campaign, who has had experience of the fight for freedom, and who had seen those hard days of the battle for Indian freedom. Such a man should have been found for writing this report, instead of entrusting it to another man who could not put all the facts with all the fire and sentiment at his command.

As I said, there are 5 most important recommendations. The first is the price-page schedule on which so much hubub has been created, the working journalists' charter, the P.T.I. the U.P.I. and Hindustan Samachar news agencies, the Press Council and a State trading corporation for the import of newsprint. I do hope that the hon. Minister who has so much earnestness in the department, will, with the aid of his efficient Secretary, implement all these five most important recommendations. Take the price-page schedule. A subscriber will ask, why do you give me a limited number of pages at a particular price. This price-page schedule will no doubt drive out some papers out of business. The bigger papers will feel happy that the smaller papers have been driven out. But in the long run, even the bigger papers will have to come to trouble. We do not want a single paper to be so powerful as to be able to overthrow a national Government or subvert a national policy. I do not want this instrument to be in the hands of a few press barons. The National Union of Journalists put their finger on the pie in England and they said:

"We are of opinion that the production of newspapers cannot be governed by the strictly commercial considerations which

govern the making and marketing of other commodities in general demand. Our function is in the nature of a public trust and should be so regarded.

We seek, above all else, as a body of professional men and women, that the industry in which we serve the community should be directed and managed primarily in the public interest."

May I ask whether these questions posed by them in Britain do not apply word for word to the state of the industry in our own land? We have a few press barons who suddenly came over the land like worms coming out of dirty or muddy water like snakes in the grass, with their huge balances in the bank, to control vital organs of the Indian press and dictate their policy and influence public opinion in such a way that we do not know whether even Parliament can be subservient to them or subordinate to them. On a very memorable occasion when Hoare Belisha who was a very popular Minister in Britain, who was responsible for a revolutionary measure, namely conscription in peace time, introduced it, all the organs of the British press were against him, but when he resigned there was a chorus of approval about what he did. Sir Winston Churchill wrote a very memorable sentence in his book and said that Parliament does not take its opinion from newspapers,—indeed it often reacts in the opposite sense. These are the words of a master of journalism and a great figure in Parliamentary life. When Hoare Belisha made a statement in the House of Commons, the news papers went against him and said that they would not publish it. This is what Churchill mentions in his book.

So, if we are building a welfare State, if we are going to have a socialist State, we cannot have a few barons of the press getting hold of the P.T.I. and using it in the most unscrupulous fashion, controlling news agencies, having all the machinery in their hands and even monopolising

newsprint through the agency of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society. Perhaps there is no other club which costs as much as this society, namely Rs. 1,000 per annum. It consists of only 80 or 100 members. They admit no small newspapers in their gathering. It is a closed club and they corner all the newsprint. The leading members of the society do this. I can even give the names without any fear, because for my own paper which is a casualty of the freedom movement, we had bought newsprint from them at a black market rate.

Shri M. P. Mishra (Monghyr North-West): Their name?

Shri Joachim Alva: *Times of India*. Bennett Coleman and Co., if you want to know.

The Government must see that this subscription of Rs. 1,000 is lowered down to Rs. 100 and that the smallest newspaper from every part of India becomes a member of it. Government shall not give that society any privileges which it does not give to the other man.

Unfortunately, we have to have the other association, namely the Indian Languages Newspapers Association, and it is a great tragedy that that body has a lean backing. The Indian languages press has borne the greater brunt in the freedom fight. It can boast of great figures like Lokamanya Tilak and even Shri Khadilkar, editor of the *Navakal*, the oldest Marathi paper of Bombay. But the barons of the press have come and built the press with the crossword which is responsible for a building of two floors of the *Times of India*. I can never forget that historic scene when Shri Khadilkar in 1928 stood at the bar of the Bombay High Court, defended by no less a person than Shri Bhulabhai Desai, whose voice was heard with great attention in this House, with a solicitor and patron like B. G. Kher, but the judge closed his eyes and sentenced him for two years. Such papers have become casualties at the hands of crosswords and the huge bank balances of th

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press barons. What is going to be their fate? Who is going to give them a helping hand? Is the State coming forward?

The Report very casually mentions about the Industrial Finance Corporation. What does it do? My rich friends, my capitalist friends are very influential people. The Industrial Finance Corporation lends money to the tune of half a crore to undertakings run by them. They float companies, with Rs. 3 crores capital and the Government of India gives them another crore, and from the investors they get another crore. With the result that even in my constituency which is the most backward in India you have a paper factory. With the result several small papers have become casualties. I want this report to be re-written, to mention the casualties of the Indian press who died either for want of money or because their press was confiscated or because they did not have sufficient capital. Today the Commerce and Industry Ministry says that a newspaper is not an essential product, not an essential organ of public opinion. All these papers had to stand the brunt of the battle, had to have all kinds of worries, stand the pressure of British and American advertisers. Today, who are the masters of Indian journalism? Who are the servants of Indian journalism. The masters are the British and American advertisers who operate through the big five advertising agencies like J. Walter Thompson. There is only one which is managed by Indians and the Press Commission report says it is time we had Indian capital and Indian personnel in these agencies. I had discussed this matter with Rajadhyaksha. I pointed out to him that Rs. 2½ or Rs. 3 crores were given by way of advertisement by the British and Americans and that this advertisement should be in Indian hands. He said he would think it over. I think I am not wrong in mentioning this conversation to the House. I told him: "Ask the Central Board of

Revenue to allow companies with Rs. 1 crore revenue per annum to set apart 1½ per cent of their revenue for Indian advertising." I have consulted eminent legal opinion and they say that there is no legal objection to the Central Board of Revenue permitting Indian business houses to do this. If this is done we can have Rs. 3 crores from Indian hands and thus end the hegemony of foreign advertising and our slavery. Today I challenge that if the Prime Minister and 50 other Members of Parliament stand up in this House and make a speech against Lever Brothers who are a menace to our soap industry and who advertise so much in Indian papers, not one English paper will publish it, and the paper which publishes it will have to go to the wall. It is a shame that a statement made on the floor of the House cannot be published in the columns of the mighty journals. What is the missionary spirit of these papers? Seventy per cent. of their space is taken up by advertisement, and thirty per cent by news, and they cry that there should be no price-page schedule, which is going to benefit the Indian language press which goes to the masses of India. I do not mind if the English journals are burnt,—not that I would like this to be done,—but it is better to develop the language press so that they have a circulation of 25 millions, higher than the *Daily News* of New York, higher than the *Pravda*, or the *Daily Express* of London. That will come perhaps not in our life time. It will come 25 years later when our children will see that they have a circulation of 20 million. Are you going to allow these papers to be in the hands of a few newspaper barons who have shamelessly stated before the Commission that they have done everything short of murder? When the recommendations were out, my friend, Mr. Johnson, Editor of the *Statesman* said that these recommendations will cripple the industry. He said that some recommendations were totally unworkable and that he disagreed with others and regarded some as...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member may continue tomorrow.

Shri Joachim Alva: Thank you very much.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

THIRTY-FOURTH REPORT

Shri Aitekar (North Satara): I beg to move:

"That this House agrees with Thirty-fourth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 17th August, 1955."

In this report, there is a classification of some four bills, two of which have been placed in category A, and two in category B. There is also re-classification of all the Bills that have been stated there. And about 25 Bills have been allotted time; this is given in appendix No. III. This is all what has been stated in this report. I hope the House will accept this report.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: As there are no amendments tabled to this motion, I shall put the motion to vote now.

The question is:

"That this House agrees with the Thirty-fourth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 17th August, 1955."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: So, this report is adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Now, there are some Bills to be introduced. The first Bill is in the name of Shri B. Das. The hon. Member is absent. The second is also in his name. The third is in the name of Dr. N. B. Khare; the hon. Member is absent. So, we shall take up Bills for consideration.

TITLES AND GIFTS FROM FOREIGN STATES (PENALTY FOR ACCEPTANCE) BILL

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri C. R. Narasimhan on the 5th August, 1955:

"That the Bill to provide for penalties for acceptance of titles and gifts from foreign States, be taken into consideration".

Shri C. R. Narasimhan was in possession of the House on the last occasion. He spoke for a minute last time. The total time allotted for this Bill is two hours. So, one hour and 59 minutes remain, which is as good as two hours. So, this Bill will go on till about 5 P.M.

Shri C. R. Narasimhan (Krishnagiri): For the benefit of the House, I would like to read out the Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to my Bill.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): It is not necessary. We have read it already.

Shri C. R. Narasimhan: Some might not have read. This House is somewhat as follows. Members come here and behave like a sort of floating population; some come and some others go. So, whenever we commence any business, it is necessary to have a mental resume of the whole thing before we set ourselves to the task before us.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons reads:

"Acceptance of titles conferred by foreign States is prohibited by clause (2) of article 18 of the Constitution...".

Article 18 (2) of the Constitution is relevant in this matter. But unfortunately, while the Constitution puts a ban on the acceptance of titles from foreign States, it does not contain any provision for punishment in case of breach of this provision. I therefore