

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. This matter has been discussed on a previous occasion when I said that if any further suggestions as to details are to be made, it is better for hon. Members to approach the members of the Business Advisory Committee and they may adjust or, if necessary, in the House itself the Speaker may adjust these things in the light of the discussions on the amendments and all that; but, generally, it has now been agreed that we do not question the report here.

**Shri T. S. A. Chettiar:** I am not questioning it I am only suggesting that this time-limit may not be very strictly adhered to and that it may be adjusted according to the circumstances.

**Mr. Speaker:** The overall time, I believe, is sixty-four plus four, that is sixty-eight hours. Within that time it is possible to make adjustments, looking to the progress of the Bill. In all there are sixty-eight hours.

The question is:

"That this House agrees with the Twenty-third Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 19th August, 1955."

*The motion was adopted.*

#### MOTION RE REPORT OF PRESS COMMISSION.—Contd.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House will now resume further discussion of the Report of the Press Commission.

As already decided, the House will sit till 6 P.M. today.

**Shri Dabhi (Kaira North):** May I know if there is going to be a time-limit on speeches?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it necessary to fix any time-limit? What is the limit that the House would like? Shall we say, ordinarily half an hour?

**Some Hon. Members:** Fifteen minutes ordinarily.

**Mr. Speaker:** Very well. As a large number of hon. Members are anxious to speak, instead of ordinarily half an hour as I stated at first, it will be ordinarily fifteen minutes, but not exceeding half an hour in any case.

**Shri K. K. Basu (Diamond Harbour):** Let the first announcement stand.

**Shri Joachim Alva (Kanara):** I hope this limit will apply after I have concluded, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** The fifteen minute rule will not apply to him, as he started yesterday, but the half an hour rule will apply to him.

He has, I may remind him, already spoken for nineteen minutes.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** I was speaking yesterday about the Huns, the Vandals and the Scythians who have now invaded large fields of Indian journalism. On a former occasion, one of the ablest Indian civilians, Lord Hailey, speaking in this very House in reference to the onslaught of the Swarajists in this House said that the Vandals, the Scythians and the Huns had come into this House. They tried to capture the soul of Indian nationalism, but what has happened is that they have tried to destroy the soul of Indian nationalism and I shall try to prove this to you. Five owners control 29 papers with 31.2 per cent. of circulation in India, 15 owners control 54 papers with 50 per cent. circulation in India, with the result that 20 owners control 85 per cent. circulation in India through their 83 papers. This is a very large percentage. The 85 per cent. of the circulation that is wielded by 20 owners in India is indeed a very dangerous thing, and that is exactly why we have to strive and control at any cost to keep the newspaper owners out of the coterie and also the news agencies. The P.T.I. is already in their pockets, but Government, I hope will come out with strong measures to see that it is out of their pockets. The U.P.I. is already controlled by some of them in the sense that the boss of one of the largest concerns has a large interest in the U.P.I. I cannot help mentioning these things for the simple reason that I regret

that the Press Commission has not followed the example of the U.K. Royal Commission where they have unreservedly mentioned the names of news agencies and individuals and papers. While the Rajadhyaksha Report mentions people without naming them, by making them feel such names though really they have kept the names nameless, we know which names they are, and I feel the history of that Report would have been complete if only the names had been mentioned without any kind of reservation.

[Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

I was mentioning my friend, Mr. Johnson, the Editor of the *Statesman* yesterday, as stating that the Indian newspaper industry would be crippled and would become unworkable, and it is damaging to the Indian newspaper industry. So also my friend, Shri Jain, the General Manager of the *Times of India* who is now on a world tour said, "the majority of the recommendations of the Commission, if implemented, would result in substantial modification and also cripple the newspaper industry and force them to go out of the business". We want big papers like the *Times of India* and as a matter of fact all the other papers to be here so that their importance may be shared by the smaller papers. What does a leader of the Indian language newspaper industry say, Shri Shanti Lal Shah, who is a Minister of the Bombay Government, but who was a trustee of the *Janmabhumi*, the largest vernacular group of papers, started by my late friend, Shri Amrit Lal Seth, to whom I should like to pay my tribute? He was the first and only Indian in the hey-day of the British Raj to extract a written apology from the *Times of India* and it granted substantial damages to him, and I remember how he worked inside the Nasik Road prison in 1932, looking through all the law books on the question of defamation to be claimed against the *Times of India*. This group of papers was started by Shri Amrit Lal Seth. What does Shri Shanti Lal Shah, a member of the Bombay Cabinet and

also a trustee of this group say? He says that the Government should accept the price-page schedule and only by the acceptance of this recommendation would the language press be able to carry out the financial implications of the Report of the Commission. I would like you to have a glance at the *Daily Herald* of London. It has the third largest circulation among the papers in the U.K. In the *Daily Herald* 51 per cent of the shares are held by Odhams and the nominees of the T.U.C. hold the remaining 49 per cent. that is the Labour Party and by the T.U.C. The T.U.C. says "you shall follow our industrial policy." The Labour Party says "you shall follow our political policy". With such a combination or confusion, there was grave discontent during the last elections in the ranks of the Labour Party and in the Trade Union Congress that the *Daily Herald*, an organ of the Labour Party, did not follow completely the political and industrial policy of the Labour Party and T.U.C. If a paper of the standing and calibre of the *Daily Herald*, which commands over two million circulation is not able to carry out the policy of the Labour Party, I want to know how and in what manner our own Press, operated by these Press lords of India, can function. They not only function through these agencies but they have tried to work the newspapers by manipulation of the tariffs, by nepotism, by overdrawing the limits to which their credit would have allowed. It is time that the Government uses its lever because these are very grave charges. No doubt Shri Dev Das Gandhi, as chairman of the P.T.I., is striving to do his best, in the spirit of his revered father, for the improvement in the condition of the employees, but yet it is not all in their favour. Look at those group of young men, newspaper journalists, who sit in the galleries of the Parliament and they report in every town of India. They should be given the ordinary amenities of a decent life, housing telephone, etc., and it is a pity that they cannot even get a cup of coffee at the expense of

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their employees. Neither do they have stenographers to facilitate their work and yet they are going on reporting the proceedings of one of the largest Parliaments of the world under these conditions. The directors are drawing enormous sums of money through their papers, but they do not think of even a three figure cheque or a two figure cheque for the amenities of their employees. Now, therefore, Government must use their lever to see that the P.T.I. is turned into a public corporation. The Lord Chief Justice of England has been authorised to nominate the chairman of the board for the Press Association and the News Proprietors Association, which form the Reuters Trust. So, what is sauce for the British newspapers is certainly sauce for Indian newspapers, and it is time that the P.T.I. became a public corporation, which the Rajadhyaksha Commission advocates.

Unless such a corporation comes into existence quickly, the handicaps of the Press men would be there whatever settlement may have been arrived at. I would urge the hon. Minister of information and Broadcasting that he quickly, efficiently and collectively implemented all these proposals and not implement the price-page schedule separately or any one recommendation separately. He should not allow any kind of influence to come into play however powerful that influence may be. But he should depend on the collective wisdom of the House and implement the recommendations. If the recommendations are not carried out effectively, there is no other way open.

What has happened in Egypt? The circulation of papers is five or ten times than that in India though their population is hardly twenty million as against 360 million in India. What is happening there? I do not say anything in favour or against the regime in Egypt. They have their own difficulties. At the time of King Farouk, the Press was controlled by big Press lords. There was

no other way open for Egypt. What have they done? Some of them are seeking shelter in Switzerland. Perhaps Press lords here may have to take shelter in Switzerland or in the salubrious climate of some other democracies. I do not want that stage to come. This Parliament has the sovereign power to do what it likes and it knows how to control the events. So perhaps those days need not come.

In the United Kingdom they have come to the conclusion that there is nothing approaching a monopoly in the Press as a whole. I have quoted whatever is favourable to us; in fairness I must state the other side of the case also. We shall now see what is happening. If the price-page schedule comes, many small papers will go to the wall. Many people are shedding tears and saying: 'My paper is going to be closed.' Many good and courageous journalists in the land closed down for want of money, or other resources. They ask us to shed the tears of the whole Parliament by saying: 'I am closing down or I am going to close down.' Many of them never shed tears when the most eminent journalists of the land fell under the sword of the British rule. Have these people ever tried to do anything for them? Has Government tried to do anything for them? These are vital matters. If a few papers go to the wall—even the larger papers have a fear—then the entire nation will suffer. We have the classic example of the *Daily Mail* of London. What happened? It is said:

"Whereas before the war the *Daily Mail*, to take a single example, carried an average of 1,308 column inches of advertising a day, in 1947 it carried only 326. Nationwide advertising pushed out the London Papers and went into the provinces."

This is what we want to happen. Advertisers must go to the columns of other papers so that those papers may become strong and live for a better day. About advertisements, I must say that in the United Kingdom

the role of advertising has been stressed thus:

"One of the mightiest and consequently one of the dangerous forces in the world—if we dispute its danger, we deny its might."

Unfortunately, the Press Commission did not see its way to stress the evils of foreign advertisements in India. I want the foreign advertisements to be handled only by Indian firms. I do not want them to be handled by foreign concerns who dictate their terms to the Indian journals. We want a very effective control on this. It puts them forward sometimes without written orders. We have to see that the largest advertising work in the world is done by Indian executives. Either they must throw open the capital to Indians so that we may be able to operate the papers successfully or we shall have to take some other step. The amount spent on advertising in India in 1954 was Rs. 2,31,47,352. As against this, the amount spent in America was prodigious—some thing bigger than what we spend for our defence. *Editor and Publisher* in New York puts the figure at Rs. 111,56,52,621. This is the secret why America does not back India on the Goa policy. This advertising figure of the American papers goes only to the highly monopolistic and concentrated firms and newspapers and they support big business and are not certainly interested in India. That is also the basis of American foreign policy.

I want to come to the working journalists again. They should have facilities to dine, to eat, to rest and to sleep from midnight to morning. They have no conveyance to go home. At all airports, railway stations and harbours of India, these facilities must be given to them straightaway. There are no such facilities worth the name. 300 trained graduates—the Commission says—will have training in all the newspapers in India and the newspapers must find place for them sooner or later. The Commission has said that seven forms of punishment will finally fire out a journalist: warn-

ing, censure, withholding of increment, withholding promotion, forced leave, suspension and termination of service. I think journalists have secured a great and substantial victory in this. They must realise that they have also a duty to fulfil. A journalist who is fifty years old is quite different from one who is 25 or 30. An old journalist has seen more hard days and he could have never said: 'I would not do this or that.' The youngsters have to learn a lot from the elders and not merely demand their rights. They should be given the essential amenities.

It has been said that the All India Radio reaches eight lakhs of homes but all the newspapers reach 25 lakhs. It is a very small number compared to the millions that England has as its circulation.

There is one most interesting thing. In spite of all the ties between the United Kingdom and India and all the stress on the Commonwealth, the U.K. papers give only 0.5 per cent news about India while Netherlands' percentage is 1.3. It is 0.5 in respect of Belgium, Belgium need not be interested in India. There is a moral from these figures with regard to the English newspapers who have no support for us even in regard to our policies in the matter of Goa. They give less than what Belgium gives. These are really revealing figures.

The Press Council is something very very formidable. It must come and must function. The Chairman must be a man nominated by the Lord Chief Justice of India. It must not consist of Press lords alone; it must consist of working journalists. The managing boards of newspapers in India, whether they are big or small, must have working journalists on their boards and unless that is done we cannot think of having any co-operation and we shall not be able to work in a systematic way.

In regard to the State trading corporation for newsprint I would suggest that Government take over also the white paper and not merely newsprint. There has been blackmarketing. A factory is coming right to my own

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constituency at the instance of my hon. friend, Shri G. D. Somani. When there is war, the oil companies of Europe and America—the black-mailers—will say that if you follow a particular foreign policy we will sell you oil. So, also these newsprint factories which are in the hands of a few lords of India will sell paper in the black-market only to those newspapers which will be favourable to them. Therefore, it is time that Government when it is establishing State trading corporations, not only takes over newsprint in its hands but it also takes over the white paper in its hands. The head of a family cannot say that he will only look after the girls and not the boys.

**The Minister of Defence Organisation (Shri Tyagi):** The white paper is always in the hands of the Government.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** I do not think so. Just as the head of a family cannot say that he will only look after the girls and not the boys, the Government cannot say that it will take only the newsprint. If it takes only the newsprint and not the white paper then the whole function of the Government will be ineffective and there will be economic disorder.

Sir, I have done. I only appeal to the hon. Minister to implement things as quickly as he can. He can give one year's notice to all newspapers to put their houses in order. We do not want anyone to die. Just as the working journalists are going to get seven stages of warning etc., so also the newspapers should be allowed to take their own time to live and survive and live for a better day. I also hope that all the five important things which I have narrated will be linked, and linked like steel so that the future of Indian journalism may be saved.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Member should close now.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** One word more and I have done.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** No more word now.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** I want also to say that plots of land in our metropolitan cities should be given to working journalists for clubs at Rs. 1-0-0 a yard and they should not be merely available to the Press barons.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta North-East):** In spite of the comparatively persuasive tone of the Minister's speech yesterday, I feel I cannot help saying that it is still somewhat ironic that it has taken more than a year, after the submission of the Press Commission's Report to Government, for us in this House to have a debate; and we are yet unaware of the Government's real intentions even in regard to the major recommendations of the Commission.

I find from a precis supplied to us by the Lok Sabha Secretariat that since the 8th of September, 1954 the Minister has given about 8 assurances in this House as well as outside regarding early implementation of the Commission's recommendations. On the 13th November last year, the Prime Minister himself told pressmen that the vast majority of the 120 recommendations would be given effect to. Then again on the 31st May this year, the Prime Minister gave as his own view that the Government did not consider the recommendations impracticable. This is in answer to the propaganda which is being conducted in this House and outside very sedulously to the effect that the Press Commission's work is quite all right but somehow or other it is not practicable.

I refer to this because I am convinced that this procrastination has been due to the influence on Government of that unsavoury tribe whom Acharya Kripalani yesterday wanted me to describe rather colourfully; but I find that I do not have to requisition my describing talents for this purpose because an eminently sedate and soft spoken leader of journalists Shri Chelapathi Rao had been driven to call them the "Thugs" and "Pindaries" of the Press. Very possibly, one of

these people appeared before the Press Commission and told them that he had committed every crime short of murder. It is these people, and their agents who are going about all over the place carrying on propaganda,—sometimes subtle, more often not so subtle, but most often utterly mendacious—the object of which is only to secure.....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Did that witness mean it seriously?

**Shri Kamath (Hoshangabad):** Why not? Take him at his words.

**Shri K. K. Basu:** That is one on the record.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** So, there is going on a propaganda in order to secure the shelving of the Press Commission's recommendations.

I want also to make it clear at the very outset that though I want early implementation of the recommendations of the Press Commission *in toto* I am not so enamoured of the Report that I consider it is perfect, I do not consider it to be perfect. It is not a document which marks a decisive break with a bad past. It includes passages,—luckily only a few passages,—which I deplore. It is a pity that its majority could not even persuade themselves to support the minute of dissent in regard to Press laws which is signed by four of its members. But, it is essentially an honest and thorough-going document which sincerely wishes a healthy beginning for increasing the process of democratisation in the Press. That is why I say that it is absolutely imperative that Government comes forward to say that it is going to accept its recommendations at once; it is going to start; practically speaking, those processes which are necessary for putting into effect these recommendations whether by legislative action, by executive action or by other courses that are open to the administration.

Sir, sometimes we hear the lamentation—yesterday Acharya Kripalani also gave vent to it—that journalism is not what it used to be; that ~~what~~ was a vocation has turned out to be

something like a 'mere job doing'. I wish here to say that I am positive that we have among our working journalists people who do have a sense of dedication; who delight in their exacting and harassing work because they know it is part of work for the social good. It is not their fault, but the result of objective tendencies working in the world today which have resulted in transforming journalism into an impersonal mechanism, more complicated, more standardised and more departmentalised. That is a reason why we do still have great editors. But, perhaps, we do not think we are called upon to apply that adjective to their names. We do not think it is necessary today to speak in the way that Abraham Lincoln did when he told W. H. Russel of the *London Times* that Russel "was the greatest power he knew except perhaps the Mississippi river." But these days such things are not said. The power of the Press has passed and this is the crux of the matter—from ethically-minded journalists to grasping millionnaires who are intent on drugging and raping the mind of our people; who are intent on controlling policiars and Government and minting money in the bargain. That is the position. That is the kind of crisis which we have reached and that is why it is necessary for Government to take action as soon as ever that is possible.

If we care, therefore, for the decencies and traditions of honest journalism in our country today—the roll of honour in the journalistic sphere was narrated to a certain extent by Acharya Kripalani—it is up to us to come forward to check the rapacity and degradation of the people whose characteristics have been described objectively in the Press Commission's Report. We cannot too often repeat that out of a total of 330 dailies 5 owners control 29 newspapers and 31.2 per cent of the circulation while 15 owners control 54 newspapers and 50.1 per cent of the circulation. Even in the United States, the home of monopoly, 15 owners control 30.1 per

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cent of the circulation. It is not necessary for me to go into more details but I may, perhaps, be permitted to point out a few instances which are so glaring. We find that in English there are 36 papers but six papers control about 65 per cent of the total circulation and they are controlled by the chains and combines. In Bengali there are two papers out of six dailies and they control two-thirds of the circulation. In Gujarathi there are 20 papers but 4 of them control more than half the total circulation. In Marathi there are 21 papers although 3 of them have more than half the circulation. In Tamil we find that out of ten papers, three control 81 per cent of the total circulation and a magnate comes from God knows where; he knows nothing about Tamil and he controls and dominates the Tamil Press. You will find the same thing in every linguistic zone of our country.

Now, these five or fifteen owners in India, apart from their grip over the Press, control not only the operation and management of almost every sector of the industry, but they are in a monopolistic position in regard to newsprint, in regard to advertisements, financial resources, banking facilities and relations with Government in their representative capacity. Such power is dangerous and no wonder our Press has wilted as far as its character is concerned. These monopolists showed their ugly teeth when the Press Commission Report was published and we have heard already in this House how the United Press of India blacked out altogether the news of the Press Commission's recommendations. This United Press of India claims to be a national institution, and then the P.T.I., which again claims to be a bigger national institution because it has bigger fry on it, mutilated the summary of the Press Commission's recommendations. This game continues still and this gump-tion must not be tolerated.

The Press Commission, with all its predilections for conservatism—I say

this because who will call the late Justice Rajadhyaksha and Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar as foam-at-the-mouth fanatics asking for revolution and that kind of thing—has given a general picture of financial and industrial chaos, of slovenliness, vulgarity and even occasionally fraud, so that our Press seems, as one of its most distinguished members said, more a racket than an industry. This racket must go. They talk about the socialist pattern and here is a racket controlled by those who want to dominate the country, who want control of the nation's laws as they have the control of the nation's news, and that is why it is important that we go ahead, as far as possible, and take all the steps we can, with regard to the Press Commission's recommendations.

I find also that the grand word 'freedom' is again being very subtly used by vested interests carrying on their propanganda. We have been told that the Press of India is so wonderful, that it has got a magnificent past and it is a symbol of freedom. It is being put in a straight jacket by the Government of the day. I am not particularly in love with the Government of the day but I know there are certain principles which any Government with pretensions to decency has got to adopt and as far as the recommendations of the Press Commission are concerned they relate to something which the Government should implement at once, by legislative, executive and other kinds of action. Immensely more than the newspaper magnates, we are against official interference where that interference is uncalled for. And as far as freedom of expression is concerned, we go much further than even the Minute of Dissent given in the Press Commission Report. But no item of legislation or other kinds of action proposed in the Commission's recommendations is unwarranted from the point of view of public good. To legislate, for example, for minimum conditions of service, for a public corporation, for bodies like the P.T.I. and U.P.I., for a Press Council, for a State trading

Corporation for newsprint, for a flexible price-page schedule, for a ban on indecent advertisement, sensationalism and quasi-gambling practices like ridiculous cross-word competitions—every kind of action for firmly putting down unfair and restrictive practices—all these things are by no means interference. They are something which Government has got to do if it has to be worth its salt. It is the very minimum that the State must do to redress the balance which the public cannot do today. All these items hang together and that is why I have given an amendment to the effect that the recommendations *in toto* have to be given effect to because you cannot have one thing and leave out the other. The whole thing hangs together. The Press Commission has built up a kind of mosaic structure and you cannot tinker with it and disturb it and take one out and put something else in its place. That is why I say that it is very important that we take the recommendations of the Press Commission and try to put them into effect. As one example, I would say, let us think of the proposed Press Council. Unless the working conditions of the journalists are improved, unless the other recommendations restricting those practices which these 'thugs' and 'pindaris' take recourse to are stopped, it is no use, and if these are not done, the Press Council would be another stage for the vested interests to appear in a different sanitimonious cloak. We want in the Press Council not only those who are masquerading as managing editors and proprietors but we want the representation of working journalists and we want the Press Council to be a body which will really be able to deliver the goods. There is no reason on earth why there should not be a limitation on profits. The Press Commission recommends four per cent. If our railways can be run, if our electricity concerns can have certain limitations on profits, then I do not see why we cannot think of putting this limitation on the newspaper industry, an industry which pretends to be a public utility and

an industry which gets postal and many other concessions out of our own public funds. There is no reason why we should not resist the rapacity of finance capitalism which rules the roost in the Press which has resulted in corrupt practices and racketeering monopolies, dependence on advertisements, falsification of circulation figures, etc., apart from the absence of minimum conditions of service in a large majority of newspapers and the absence of salary scales even in newspapers which claim to be national institutions.

I know it is true that, as far as the smaller papers are concerned, their financial condition is bad. But that is due to the unfair and unequal competition as in *matsya nyaya* where the big fish swallow up the smaller fry. Editorial costs in language papers work out to less than 10 per cent. and even if all the recommendations regarding working conditions are accepted, the increase would not be more than three to four per cent. at the very outset. The real difficulty of these smaller papers arises out of the variation in the price of other factors like newsprint particularly when they are compelled in the absence of a price-page schedule to sell their papers below the cost of production. The smaller papers can be saved only by adopting economic measures like the price-page schedule.

As regards the other papers, the figures of revenue, expenditure and profit are given by the employers who, somebody in England once said, are the rouge elephants of the Press. The Commission itself referred to the possibilities of concealment of profit in paragraphs 143 and 144. This instance of concealment of profits came out in the case of the Dalmia chain when it was shown that a sum of Rs. 3 lakhs was described as expenditure on advertisement commission. That was really a payment to a subsidiary and possibly a relative. When this was pointed out to them, the owners were agreeable to treating it as a profit rather than disclose the details of such a payment which was shown and



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alleged to be advertisement commission. This is one instance of manipulation of accounts and this one instance alone distorts by fifty per cent. the total return of profits which they give. The whole industry is supposed to have returned a profit of about Rs. 6 lakhs. Three lakhs of rupees are shown to be part of this racketeering process! We do not know what is what and perhaps if the Press Commission had even longer time at its disposal there may have been other more sensational disclosures coming out.

A recommendation has been made regarding the separation of accounts of multiple units, the giant combines operating in Bombay and Delhi and Calcutta and Allahabad. This recommendation which I commend is intended as much in the interests and soundness of each unit as in the interests of the Government receiving the taxes that are its due. It is also intended to check the capricious diversion to the kind of adventure which one chain of papers practised with the result that in 1953 there was a colossal closure in Calcutta. *The Times of India* and its subsidiary papers all closed down very suddenly. In regard to this, I find that this chain, whose case came up before Parliament and which even drew the attention of the Prime Minister who expressed himself in regard to this service, behaved in such a manner that in July, this year, 124 journalists working under this combine made an application to the Minister and I myself forwarded it to the Minister who has promised to consider this matter. They applied because in spite of the decision of the Labour Appellate Tribunal, these editorial workers—124 in number—are not getting their due from this unspeakable combine. That combine has the gumption to do so because it knows that it can have every kind of influence to exert upon the powers that be. I hope the Minister who is already apprised of this case will take such action as would teach these miserable people, these rapacious racketeers, the lesson which they so eminently deserve.

In regard to the price-page schedule, it is necessary to put a limit on the size in view of the unequal competition between those who can give more waste paper because of their control of finance and those who cannot. There must be a regulated price; it may not be necessarily a higher price. Acharya Kripalani pointed out it need not be necessarily a higher price. Smaller newspapers must exert themselves in favour of economies without denying economic justice to their employees. I understand the Indian Language Newspapers' Association are entirely in favour of the price-page schedule. At least that is the information which I have got and I feel that there is nothing wrong with the price-page schedule which existed till the middle of 1952; and, it was a period when the monopolist proprietors who are now shouting against that system amassed the greatest wealth and went into expansion. That was the time when the *Times of India* started in Calcutta, the *Indian Express* in Delhi and so on and so forth. Since the price-page schedule was abolished, 22 well-established newspapers have gone out of existence. The Indian Language Newspapers' Association have favoured the price-page schedule, because they say small papers will otherwise be driven out of the market and they will not be able to implement the recommendations regarding wages and working conditions

I can give a few instances to underline the point I have just mentioned. Let us take, for example, Delhi. Why should one paper sell here at 1½ annas, whereas other papers are selling at 2½ annas? Why should one paper which sells at Calcutta at 2½ annas sell at 2 annas at Allahabad? They say, it is for the consumers' benefit: but they are doing it for other reasons. They want to grab the market; and, what are the steps which they take? What are the machinations they employ? They have recourse to crossword competitions; they print astrological predictions and all kinds of silly things about Mandrake the magician; and they try to tempt the reader into

ways which are by no means healthy. I know that at one time in England.....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** There are also specifics for incurable diseases.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** Yes. There was in England one enterprising publisher who, during the influenza epidemic just after the war, soaked a whole edition in eucalyptus and said that if you read his paper, you would get immunity from influenza. That was a time when there might have been something in it which the Health Ministry might have applauded! But this kind of racket should not go on. These people take recourse to all kinds of things only in order to get control of the market. What are these people? There was, for example, *The Leader* in Allahabad with a tradition, which was brought up by a multi-millionaire—he only wanted to control the nation's views and through that to control the nation's laws. That is why these people who want to go up further higher and higher in the scale of money-making are entering this game. This price-page schedule is, therefore, a matter which should be gone into thoroughly. I would like the Ministry to consider very carefully the recommendations of the Press Commission, which from the practical point of view are still somewhat tentative. There is a table worked out by one of the Members of the Commission; but that table may not be absolutely satisfactory. It may be that some changes here and there may have to be made. I hope certain mechanism will be thought of by means of which the Minister would be able to analyse the other...

**The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Dr. Keskar):** The Commission has not accepted the table; it has only accepted its principle. The table is only by way of illustration.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** I turn to the question of managing editorships which is something which I very sincerely deplore. Like all forms of managing agency, this managing editorship must go. I say this because, these managing editors can

neither manage journalism nor can they write to save their lives; and the result is that real editors are completely at their mercy, I know of a former President of the Indian Journalists' Association in Calcutta who was an editor. He went to his office one evening and there was a letter saying that his services were no longer required. He was the most eminent living Bengali journalist of the age and he was just pushed out. I know another gentleman who was for sometime President of the P.T.I. Employees' Union. He was working as the principal leader-writer in a newspaper in Calcutta—I shall not mention the name—and in 1946 there was a strike by the workers. No paper in India except the Communist press published news of that strike. This gentleman, who had joined the strike, was pushed out and I believe as a journalist he is still unemployed. He is just getting some money as a lecturer in Calcutta University. Only the other day, I remember, a very big Bengali newspaper in Calcutta with the largest circulation of any daily in India, sacked a gentleman who had a hobby. It was to read and write plays and dramas. Some progressive groups took him to their heart and performed some of those plays. After this, he was considered to be a rabid communist and after 20 years' service in this newspaper in an editorial capacity, he has been given the order of the boot. This is the kind of thing which happens and these managing editors who come from some of those heights of financial deception try to do damage in the sphere of journalism.

In regard to astrological predictions and other things, the Press Commission has expressed itself very strongly and I wish something is done about it. I realise that a paper which wants to be serious need not necessarily be loud. I know that some frills and fripperies might very well be permitted, but there is no room in our country if we are going to have this kind of journalism and that is why this recommendation must also...

**Dr. Keskar:** How do you propose to stop astrological predictions?

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** There is the Press Council.

**Shri K. K. Basu:** If the Minister does not read that?

**Shri V. P. Nayar (Chirayinkil):** Probably he reads only that.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** I would like to refer to the news agencies about which something has already been said—the P.T.I. and the U.P.I. I feel, particularly in view of the declarations of Government about the socialistic pattern of society, we must get a reorganisation of these two news agencies. As far as the U.P.I. is concerned, it started in a humble fashion with a great deal of patriotic support, but lately, into it has entered one of the rogue elephants to whom I referred earlier. One particular gentleman—again I do not wish to name him—who is very successful with his gambles in the stock exchange is Chairman of a sub-committee which is to control this U.P.I.; and he has got a veto even over the other two members of the sub-committee. This is the U.P.I. which now claims to be a national patriotic organisation started in the days of the independence movement and all that kind of rot; something has got to be done about it. I am reminded in this connection of what has been happening about the teleprinters. The Press Commission has remarked about it. It has very clearly stated that it has found instances of the misuse of these teleprinters. At page 116 it says:

“Instances have been brought to our notice where the lines rented out to news agencies and newspapers have been misused and private and business messages have been transmitted on these circuits. This has naturally been a legitimate grievance for the P. and T. Department who feel that in the name of the Press they are thus deprived of their proper revenue. The management of the news agencies have admitted that this practice has come to their notice and have assured us that they are taking steps to put a stop to it. We consider that the Telegraph Department would be justified in

monitoring those circuits which they suspect are being misused and in taking strong action against the offenders.”

1 P.M.

I have been trying to find out what is the kind of strong action which Government has adopted and I discovered a question asked this session, question No. 692 on the 12th August, 1955, by Mr. M. L. Dwivedi. On that occasion, the Minister for Communications said that certain teleprinter circuits on which misuse was observed, were withdrawn from the news agencies concerned. Then, he amplified it when supplementaries were asked. He said:

“पी० टी० आई० और ए० पी० आई० समाचार एजेंसियों के पास टेलीप्रिंटर थे। ए० पी० आई० के पास न्यू दहली से मॉटिंडा, न्यू दहली से मुजफ्फरनगर और न्यू दहली से लुधियाना के सर्किट्स थे जिनको कि इस समाचार एजेंसी से हटा लिया गया है। पी० टी० आई० के पास बम्बई—इन्दौर की टेलीप्रिंटर लाइन थी, उसको भी डिस्कनेक्ट कर दिया है। यह एक्शन इन सर्किटों पर दुरुपयोग बंद करने के खातिर लिया गया।”

After that, another question was asked as to why further action was not being taken against these agencies—Then, the Minister said:

“माननीय सदस्य की इस बात का ध्यान रखना चाहिए कि यह दोनों समाचार एजेंसियां बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण एजेंसियां हैं जो देश के विभिन्न समाचारवाहों को समाचार देती हैं और हमारी यह इच्छा है कि उनको हम अधिक से अधिक सुविधा दे सकें और इस कारण टेलीप्रिंटर सर्किट्स की उनकी मांग पर विचार करते समय हमें उन सारी चीजों को अपनी दृष्टि के सामने रखना पड़ता है।”

I do not mind our Minister describing these agencies as “बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण एजेंसियां” I do not mind it at all. At the same time, I want to know what is going to be done about it. If they are going to be considered by us, by the peo-

ple all over the country, by the press in particular as "बड़ो महुचपूर्ण एजेंडो" something has definitely got to be done about it. You cannot get away from it. This is one of the most important jobs that you have got to do.

I do not wish to take more of the time of the House. I shall refer to a point which has been mentioned by almost every other speaker, namely, in regard to the working conditions of our journalists. There is no doubt about it that the Press Commission have taken great pains on this question, and they have, after examining the different aspects of the matter, reached a certain decision. That decision is something which falls considerably short of the demand of the Federation of Working Journalists, which is a very representative organisation of intellectual workers. We find that certain subtle ways are now being tried in order to point out that this should not be done, and that the proposals of the Press Commission should not be implemented. Certain people are beginning to suggest that there should be regional Boards. Particularly, the idea is that in South India, where perhaps many of our fellow countrymen have some austere habits particularly in regard to diet, these journalists should get much less than the people in the north. I do not understand why there should be penalisation of a certain section of our intellectual workers because in regard to diet or something, they have certain habits. The Press Commission has gone into the matter in a very detailed fashion. There are other awards: bank award and awards in regard to the workers of different sectors in our industry. There are many other awards and many other findings. On the basis of generally accepted formulations, the Press Commission has reached certain conclusions which is that: the minimum which a journalist should get would be between Rs. 150 and Rs. 225, depending on the place where he is working, some more benefits accruing to a journalist if he happens to be in a very expensive place like Delhi. They have worked it out very carefully. I do not see why this

sort of sedulous propaganda is going to be listened.

\* It is sometimes said that the employers have no money. We find from the advertisement figures supplied by the employers themselves that the advertisements placed by advertising agencies on 84 member newspapers of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society have been steadily increasing. The amount of advertisement revenue was Rs. 1,81,34,976 in 1952. In 1953 it was Rs. 1,93,69,733 and in 1954 it was Rs. 2,31,47,352. These figures do not include the value of the Government and institutional advertisements which have considerably increased as also the direct and classified advertisements. There is no reason therefore for the employers to point out that they have not the capacity to pay. They have got the capacity for one thing. If they have not got the capacity, they should quit. They have no business to remain on the scene, particularly because they have come from certain spheres of activity which we consider extremely unsavoury, which we want to get out of such spheres as journalistic work in our country.

I would only ask the Minister to tell us this. So long, he had been giving us assurances about very early implementation. He was saying that he would do things very soon. The Prime Minister used the expression 'before too long'. I hope that all these expressions would be concretely defined and that we shall get some idea as to how and when we are going to get real objective implementation of at least the major recommendations of the Press Commission—though not of all the recommendations—which now require to be put either on the statute-book or put into effect through executive or any other kind of action.

I shall conclude by saying to the journalists of this country that while they have necessarily to trust the Government when the Government gives assurances, they must keep their powder dry, because without having their powder dry, collective bargaining

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as far as they are concerned, will be no good whatever and they have to collectively bargain against some of the most important and highly and strongly entrenched factors in our society. This is the sentiment with which I conclude my observations.

**Shri Natesan** (Triuvallur). I did not think I would be called upon to speak so soon. I was ruminating on the words 'thugs' and 'pindaris' used by my hon. friend there.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** You wanted to refer to the dictionary?

**Shri Natesan:** I do not know what is happening here. Yesterday, we heard of leeches, serpents, tigers, etc; today we find the words 'thugs' and 'pindaris' used here. I only hope that Members would not make use of such words even in extreme cases. What has happened now? The Press Commission report is under discussion.

**Some Hon. Members:** Nothing unparliamentary.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** It is open to an hon. Member to take exception to very strong language just as it is open to hon. Members to use strong language, though not unparliamentary.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** May I explain? I merely quoted; I did not use those words myself. I quoted from eminent people.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Unless the hon. Member agrees with it, he would not have quoted it.

**Shri Natesan:** It is no good using super adjectives when describing certain things. To call the newspaper people 'thugs' and 'pindaris', it is rather beyond my imagination. I do not think anybody would like hon. Members of this House to style managing proprietors or editors or anybody interested in the industry as 'thugs' and 'pindaris'. I leave it at that; I am not going to bother about the remarks of my hon. friends there.

So far as the Press Commission report is concerned, I think it has been warmly welcomed even by the newspaper people. I should like to deal with a few observations in the Press Commission's report. Primarily, I shall take up the question of the P.T.I. being replaced by a Corporation. I really think that even the Press Commission, with the most eminent people on it, has not been able to make out a case for the replacement of the P.T.I. It has quoted instances of mismanagement, nepotism, laxity in supervision of accounts as being sufficient for the replacement. The Press Commission should have really taken note of the fact that the P. T. I. came into existence in about 1951. During those days, it was the Reuters with its English staff that was running the institution. Now, when the P.T.I. stepped in, naturally one can understand that there might have been certain amount of malpractices. After all, it is not as if the Press Commission has discovered that there has been misappropriation of accounts, laxity and all that. The directors of the P.T.I. themselves were able to discover all this, and what did they do? Immediately they took over Reuters, they had a European...

**Shri Joachim Alva:** What about the manipulation of tariffs?

**Shri Natesan:** There is no question of manipulation of tariffs. I am now trying to explain the circumstances under which the P.T.I. were placed in those days.

**Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad** (Purnea cum Santal Parganas): What are they doing now?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Hon. Member may go on in his own way.

**Shri Natesan:** When you have an opportunity of speaking you can say whatever you feel like.

I was saying that the P.T.I. had to dispense with the service of the European first, and when the European went away, there was a Joint

Manager who happened to be a senior most Indian, and then he had to be sent away. Then they had to deal with the Chief Accountant. That takes time. All these things really take time, and from 1953 onwards I understand that the institution has been placed on a proper footing. I feel that the Press Commission has not cared to enquire in'o all these details, but has summarily come to the conclusion that this has to be replaced. To that extent I say that the Press Commission has not been fair to the P.T.I.

After all, what is the P.T.I.? That only consists of the newspaper people, having their own body of directors. I believe there are more than 125 subscribers and every director, every member of the P.T.I. has probably one share, two shares or five shares. The maximum is only five shares. If these big barons, so-called barons, happen to be at the head of the institution, the general body has always got the power to dispense with this board. If the general body who are themselves newspaper people thought that the people at the top were not desirable, they would be perfectly within their rights to dispense with them by bringing in a no-confidence motion or by some other alternative. When the association itself does not feel like replacing the board of directors, I cannot understand how the Press Commission has come to the decision that the whole body has to be replaced by a corporation. In fairness to the P.T.I. I think the Press Commission should have gone into the whole thing and come to a conclusion.

Then, all the leading news agencies in the world are owned and managed by newspapers, and I do not see why the P.T.I. should be treated differently.

Supposing there was a public corporation, who will come into it? By manipulation the same barons will be there. There is no doubt about it. After all, in the corporation also

you have got to keep the newspaper interests and who will come? If, according to you, these newspaper barons have got a pull even with the Government, well, they have got to be there, whether you like it or not. And what guarantee is there that the corporation will work satisfactorily? I for my part consider that it is absolutely undesirable to have a corporation for a newspaper business.

Then, I want to make a reference to the role of the working journalists. They have been quite impartial and they have been loyal to their profession. They have certainly raised the newspaper industry to its present status. The newspaper industry reflects our highest traditions. I do not bring in the small number of sensational papers which we may probably call the yellow press. I refer to the Indian press as understood in the general sense. We have a proud record, and the working journalist has played a major part in its achievement. That is why I do not approve of the working journalist trying to make his professional attainment a bargaining counter. He belongs to a noble profession as noble as medicine or engineering. Why does he want to bring himself to a position in which he refuses to serve unless he is treated well by the proprietors?

**Shri B. S. Murthy (Eluru):** Is it wrong ?

**Shri Natesan:** I do not want the journalist to come down to the level of a bargaining labourer. Journalism is a different profession altogether. It is something very honourable and it is not right that the journalist should be treated as a worker.

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** What is the solution?

**Sardar A. S. Saigal (Bilaspur):** What is the suggestion?

**Shri Natesan:** The suggestion is that they must work and see that they bring up the profession to a level which can be recognised by the public,

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and if there is a man who can do his work properly, I am sure no employer would like to send him away. It is not that there is no case and one fine morning he sends him away. There must be some reason for it.

**Shri Kamath:** It happened.

**Shri Natesan:** It may happen. After all this is said and done you must give some respect to the other man's remarks and observations, and I wish you were a bit patient. There is no particular hurry. The heavens are not going to fall if I say that journalists should not come down to the level of labourers. I consider that a journalist is a man who can talk on level term even with the Prime Minister or the President of India.

**An Hon. Member:** What is he to live on?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** A journalist must put up with comment on both sides.

**Shri Natesan:** I do not expect anybody to live on air. That is exactly what I am saying. As an employer myself I know that a worker must get his proper wages I do not want a journalist to become an agitator. I do not want him to call on Members of Parliament and ask them to talk for them. I do not want them to be mean. I want them to see that their profession grows and grows. After all, there is a tradition for journalism. There are any amount of journalists. There are M.As., B.As. and uneducated men. All of them live by their wits. How many people are there who can live by wit.

**An Hon. Member:** And you will not exploit it?

**Shri Natesan:** I am only speaking as a simple newspaper reader. I am not a baron like other people. I consider that once you enter the role of tradition unions you come down from the high pedestal of an impartial, honest service. Your mind becomes clouded and you cannot bring to bear on your work a catholic outlook. That is what I say. The agitational approach gets

the better of the journalist and that is reflected in his presentation of news.

You may ask now, as you have asked, how the working journalist can get a fair deal. How can he ever free himself from the caprices of a newspaper proprietor? I think the reputation that the working journalist has achieved for his paper will compel a proprietor to give the man what he deserves. We have reached a stage—and public opinion is sufficiently informed—when no newspaper of any repute can be run on sweated labour. Then there is the suggestion that we should have a Press Council. That will be the proper forum where the relations between the different limbs of a newspaper can be established and maintained.

I welcome the recommendation relating to the creation of a Press Council. It will help to promote self-criticism among those who make the newspaper, and also build up a code of ethics. But I wish to strike a note of caution. We should not try to stand before we can sit down. Let us not clothe the Council with powers which might try to make it assume the role of a second judiciary in India. In our present conditions, we should create a machinery which should not allow people to indulge in reckless allegations and hasty agitations.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** What about the press council of U. K.?

**Shri Natesan:** We are in India. I am not interested in the press council of England. When it suits you, you come and say, what about England; and when it does not suit you, you say, we are not interested in England. I have got nothing to say for or against the press council in England.

I would like the press council, in the present stage, to function as a consultative or advisory body for the people of the press rather than as a tribunal.

Now, I come to the price-page schedule. This is a very important matter. The anxiety of the smaller

language newspapers is to see that this price-page schedule comes into existence. The argument for this price-page schedule is that the smaller papers are not able to compete with the bigger ones. My hon. friend just now remarked that a paper which sells at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas is sold in Delhi where other papers are sold at 2 annas. How does the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas paper compete with the other papers here? It is only a question of competition. I find that if there are half a dozen papers selling at 2 annas or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas, those people who want to buy the 2 annas paper buy the 2 annas paper, and others who want to buy the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas paper buy the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas paper. After all, in the world, you have got to face a certain amount of competition. The smaller newspapers think that if there is a price-page schedule, and the larger papers are not allowed to use more than eight pages, then the extra amount of advertisement will come to the smaller newspapers. I am afraid that that is a mistaken idea.

After all, these papers which give eight or twelve or sixteen pages do serve a purpose. They are not wasting their space. They give publicity, for instance, to Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Russia, by photographs. Now, what would happen if you fix a price-page schedule? If you cut it down to eight pages, then naturally these photographs would not appear.

**An Hon. Member:** That does not matter.

**Shri Natesan:** After all, these photographs give a proper representation of news.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal:** Very fine argument.

**Shri Natesan:** For instance, Shri Joachim Alva is here. If I simply read Shri Joachim Alva's speech in the newspaper and I find that he spoke such and such a thing in Parliament, I do not quite follow. But if Shri Joachim Alva's photograph is there, I know immediately, oh, this is Mr. Alva, and he has spoken in Parliament. That gives me immediately an impression. So,

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this picture business is absolutely necessary in the newspapers. But if you are going to fix it to eight pages, then I am certain that most of the speeches of the Members of Parliament will be blacked out. The newspapers will simply say that Shri Joachim Alva spoke. (*Interruption*) I am speaking here in reference to the Members of Parliament, to the people of this great country. After all, one would like to have as much news as possible. We do not want simply two lines to appear...

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** You are supporting the press barons; so they will publish your picture.

**Shri Natesan:** That is exactly what I want, because I am a businessman, and I want publicity. I want my name to be advertised, and I am not ashamed of saying that I would like to be advertised. I should think this is all just a sort of flippant way of saying, oh, you want your name to be published, and you want your photograph to be published. I am trying to be as reasonable as possible. I am trying to see if I can make out a case for the consideration of hon. Members. I am trying to see if hon. Members can be made to understand that there is some such thing as business, there is some such thing as competition, and that there is some such thing as public opinion. It is not really the sayings of half a dozen people that are going to count. After all, I can go and justify this in my constituency and in my country. They are not going to say, oh, Mr. Natesan, you talked in Parliament in support of the press barons, simply because you wanted to have your photograph published. I have got dozens of photographs with me.

**An Hon. Member:** At least in the press.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy (Mysore):** What type of photographs?

**Shri Natesan:** What I want to urge is that this price-page schedule is just an attempt to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. In these days of publicity, the price-page schedule is suicidal. Do you want to cut out the display of news which draws the rea-



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ders' attention? If the display in a newspaper is curtailed, then naturally even the headlines will get curtailed. I am one of those who see the headlines. I have no time sometimes, and I just see the headlines to post myself with the news, and the headlines represent the news for me.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** That will save more of your time.

**Shri Natesan:** Here is an attempt to curtail or eliminate picture news, which in the modern days has made great and full publicity. We shall not wait for news to be condensed. It is possible to cut out all this display by fixing a price-page schedule. It is not really going to be to the advantage of the smaller newspapers. That is what I want to convince hon. Members about. If I can convince them of this, I should be more than satisfied.

What will happen if you fix a price-page schedule, and say that only four pages or eight pages should be given? If you also say that the price must be at the rate of one pice per page, then it would come to 2 annas for an eight-page newspaper. Then what is to happen to all these advertisements? Now, there are people to advertise, and we have got to find space for them. After all, these advertisements are intended for the public. It is not as if the newspapers want advertisement. Of course, they do need advertisement, because it is a paying proposition. Supposing there are 12 pages printed in a newspaper, and you want that the number of pages should be limited to eight.....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** This cutting down of the pages is the only method of preventing these people from getting into the hands of the advertising agents?

**Shri Natesan:** No. That is not. Unfortunately, we move in a world of our own just own. When you call the managing agent a leech, and when you call this man a thug and so on, the whole atmosphere is different. What I want to say is that if you have got a twelve-page newspaper, and according to this price-page schedule, you are

going to cut it down to eight pages, then that would mean that the people who are on the job of putting up those extra four pages,—they may be compositors, lithographers, typists and all sorts of other people—will be thrown out of work. After all we have got to see that also. What is the complaint now? You say that now all these papers are making terrific profits. Do you think it is possible to make high profits, when the newsprint is selling at such a high rate? I do not know how many of the hon. Members know that the price of newsprint is about £ 60 per ton. Ten years ago, it was probably £ 30 to £ 40 per ton. Do you think that the smaller newspaperman can spend that much and buy newsprint at that rate?

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** It went up to £115 during the Korean war.

**Shri Natesan:** So, the whole thing revolves. And there is nothing like money in the world. If you think you have money, then you can continue to do anything to help the smaller man I would like to help the smaller man as much as possible, and I can only help him by relaxing certain rules in the case of the small papers. If you are going to simply say, oh, these big papers are attacking us, then it is impossible. Can you go and compete with a newspaper like *The Hindu* which is about seventy years old or the *Mail* of Madras or *The Times of India* or *Statesman*, for instance? Do you think that the smaller papers can come up to their mark? They cannot.

Further, this is not England. My hon. friend was asking, what about England. In England, there is a paper in almost every provincial town. In Manchester, there is a paper; in Birmingham, there is a newspaper, and in every provincial town, there is a newspaper. Why not run a paper like that in every provincial town in India? Do you think it will get any circulation if you do that? No, it is absolutely impossible. So the conditions here are entirely different.

After all, this is a necessary evil. I am not saying that these big people

are to be supported. By all means bring them under certain regulations, as you are getting the managing agency under certain regulations under the Companies Bill. But do not think that by cutting out these big people, the small men can be helped. If you do that, then it will be a question of cutting your nose to spite somebody else. That is what I would like to say.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Is there no other method suggested in the whole report to help the smaller man?

**Shri Natesan:** There cannot be any. These small people are running their concerns without the necessary capital. They are living from hand to mouth, and no wonder they have got all this trouble.

**An Hon. Member:** Who?

**Shri Natesan:** The big people have got enormous sums of money, and they have made that money through their own efforts in the press or through other efforts in business and so on. That is not our point here. We are concerned here with the question of helping the smaller journals. By all means apply your brain to the problem. There is the Ministry, there is the Government of India, and here are the Members of Parliament. Let us all apply our brains and see how best we can raise the standard of the language newspapers. But do not condemn the big papers. After all, we need publicity, and this is what these big papers are doing. Suppose some newspaper takes it into its head to say, next week, there will be an electrical engineering supplement; then, all the electrical engineering firms would come and give their advertisements.

**Shri T. N. Singh (Banaras Dist.—East):** Was not the Hindu living from hand to mouth 40 or 50 years ago?

**Shri Natesan:** What is the good of talking about things 50 years ago? We are now in 1955. Let us see what we can do now. We cannot go on talking about things 50 years ago.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Is it the suggestion that perpetually, all through life, there must be a hand to mouth existence?

**Shri T. N. Singh:** I was referring to the hand to mouth argument.

**Shri Natesan:** Unfortunately, there is a trend in this country to see that whatever is good must be cut down; otherwise, Members are not supposed to have done some good work. You better allow the rich man to exist. Do not try to kill him. He is the man who is at your back. But you must also see that the small man is brought up. Do not pull the rich man down. If you do so, you will also go down.

He may be in the newspaper industry or in business. You must make him survive and take all that you want out of him.

**Shri L. N. Mishra (Darbhanga cum Bhagalpur):** Is that possible?

**Shri Natesan:** Everything can be possible. If there is a will, there is a way. You are very clear in your mind that you can get it done by rules and regulations.

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** Is Shri Natesan contemplating starting a paper for his advertisements?

**Shri Natesan:** No.

श्री भागवत झा आज्ञावः गरीबों के प्रति मंहरबानी मत दिखाइयें ।

श्री नटेशन : हां, मंहरबानी हैं । वे भी मानव हैं, हम भी मानव हैं, हम भी मंहरबानी करना चाहते हैं ।

I want people to report that I also spoke in Hindi, if that suits all of you. Members seem to think that we speak here just for papers' advertisement. I wish all these gentlemen who are sitting above in the Press Gallery advertise that I also spoke in Hindi. (Interruptions). I am trying to do something. It is a healthy idea.....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** It is a common weakness of all hon. Members.

**Shri Natesan:** I know. Despite all that, I am satisfied with the mere fact

[Shri Natesan]

that I have been able to take part in the discussion.

Again, here you have also asked for the names of proprietors. Hitherto we had only the names of editors and publishers. That is a good idea, to have the names of proprietors also, for you understand who is behind. But do not read too much into it. It is very much of bad taste to read too much into all these things. Simply because some business people are doing this, there must be some snag behind—that sort of attitude must not be there.

There are many other suggestions made. I think we should consider and adopt them as far as possible. But so far as I am concerned, I am really at a loss to understand how the Press Commission was not able to deal with the P.T.I. question properly. I say that it is wrong to omit to recognise the change-over from Reuters to P.T.I. After all, it took three years and things must have been in a confusion. Things were all confusion in this country when we took over the country from the Britisher. What happened then? The whole thing was in a confusion. It takes time to settle down and then go into the grievances of employees. I am surprised that the Press Commission, with such eminent men in it, should have come to a conclusion which is very serious.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** May I point out to the hon. speaker.....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Member will have a chance to speak. He was on the Commission. Everything that the Commission has said is here in black and white. Let other hon. Members have their chance.

**Shri Natesan:** Thank you. That is exactly my point. I am sure Shri T. N. Singh can repudiate what all I said. I feel that it was wrong for the Press Commission to have said that a corporation is necessary. There has not been any miscarriage of justice or anything like that in the P.T.I. There has been a lapse of three years. After all, you must also concede that

the directors come once a year from every paper. The last but one was Dr. Parulekar of a Marathi journal. Nobody would be more fair than the directors of the P.T.I. After all, they have agreed to give directorships even to the smaller papers. I do not want to take up the time of the House any more. But I can read what Dr. Parulekar has said. He also says, that 'they were never given an opportunity'. Really, they must have been given an opportunity. It is very surprising that the Commission, consisting of such eminent members, should have disposed of it summarily and made this suggestion.

**Shri C. C. Shah (Gohilwad-Sorath):** Within the limited time at my disposal, I wish to confine my observations only to one or two important recommendations of the Press Commission. Before doing that, I will only permit myself one general observation about the Report, and it is, that the Report is so thorough, impartial and objective that the Government cannot do better than generally accept all the major recommendations of the Commission and implement them as early as possible. We regret the delay that has taken place in the implementation of that Report, and I hope the hon. Minister will see to it that these recommendations are implemented without delay.

The principal point on which I wish to say a few words is a point which the last speaker touched upon, namely, the price-page schedule. It has become a controversial point because of its financial implications. The attitude of Press proprietors has varied according to the size or circulation or the standing of the paper which advocates or opposes that course. It has also varied according to the circumstances, because we will find that while some English dailies have consistently opposed this proposal, even some leading English dailies have supported it. The majority of the small and medium size, newspapers particularly language papers have supported it, while some of them have opposed it. We will find

that the same people who at one stage opposed it are now supporting it, and the same people who at one stage supported it are now opposing it, according as it suits them to do or not to do so. I do not want to cite instances, but there is enough literature to show that those who are carrying on a raging campaign against that proposal at present, at one time strongly supported it—not all of them, but some of them. I wish to say how I come to speak about this proposal. I am one of the trustees of a trust called the Saurashtra Trust which conducts seven newspapers, called the *Jambhoomi* group of newspapers. Amongst our trustees are Shri K. N. Desai, who is Chairman of the Gujerat Provincial Congress Committee, and a Member of this House; amongst the members are Shri Balwantraj Mehta and Bhawanji Arjun Khimji, who are Members of this House, and the managing trustee is Shri Shantilal Shah, the present Labour Minister of the Government of Bombay. I am mentioning these facts to show that our papers are run absolutely without any profit motive but only as a matter of public service. It is our experience that unless Government introduce the price-page schedule, in any event the language newspapers will go to the wall. I will give instances. Amongst the seven newspapers which we conduct, there is a Gujerati daily at Bombay and a Marathi daily at Bombay, there is a Gujerati weekly and a commercial weekly at Bombay, there is a Gujerati daily at Surat and a Gujerati daily at Rajkot and a Gujerati daily at Bhuj (Kutch). We cover as large an area amongst the Gujerati-speaking people and Marathi-speaking people as possible, to serve the public without any profit motive.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** With the progressive introduction of Hindi and the provincial languages, is it not likely that the English newspapers would not sell hereafter?

**Shri C. C. Shah:** That is precisely what I propose to say. The voice of

the language newspapers should have a greater consideration with the Government in considering this proposal, than even the voice of the few English leading dailies. I will give you the experience of the present position of the language newspapers in Gujerati and Marathi. Take, for example, Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad has two established Gujerati dailies which have been serving the public since years. A newcomer, relying more upon his income from cross-word puzzles and other sources than revenue from sale, has started a cut-throat competition and has begun to give a newspaper at one anna. That daily was started in November 1953. Prior thereto, the two established Gujerati dailies, which were serving the public for many years, were priced at two annas each, giving 52 pages over six days in a week. When this daily came in with one anna, giving 52 pages, there was no option for those established dailies but to reduce their price. It was first reduced to but one and a half annas. Even that was not enough. Then they reduced it to one anna. Now that cut-throat competition is going on for some time—one can imagine with what result.

**An Hon. Member:** Some papers closed there also.

**Shri C. C. Shah:** I will take the case of Baroda. The same person who had started at Ahmedabad started a daily also with the same cut-throat competition.

**Shri Kasliwal (Kotah-Jhalawar):** What is the name of that daily?

**Shri C. C. Shah:** We are not concerned with the names; and the result was an old established paper, which had been there for 60 years had to close down.

I will come now to Surat.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** In view of what the hon. Member has been saying would it be right for the Government to insist upon any person who wants to start a newspaper before he is given the licence that he should be

[Mr. Deputy-Speaker]

examined in the art of editing of writing leading articles etc. so that the working journalists only can start a newspaper and none other can do so?

**Shri C. C. Shah:** That is not the issue, I submit.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** His case is that the newspapers with crosswords have smashed up old and well-established papers that served the cause of Indian nationalism.

**Shri C. C. Shah:** There is not only the newspaper with the crossword. There are the chains of newspapers and the groups of newspapers which can afford to cut the price for a very long time and they can afford to bear the loss which they bring about until either they vanish with the rest or they remain the only ones in the field. They either kill themselves in the competition and they kill others or they remain the only survivors and then reap the benefits. That is the result of this cut-throat competition.

Now, I will give you a few facts about Surat.

We have a Gujarati daily there, as I said. One wealthy merchant started a paper—I do not know for what. And, he has begun a cut-throat competition, giving 8, 10 or 12 pages for one anna. It is impossible for any newspaper today without incurring a heavy loss, to give 8, 10 or 12 pages for one anna.

Then, in Bombay, there were three established dailies in Gujarati. All of them were priced at 2½ annas. Suddenly, one of the dailies reduced the price from 2½ annas to 1 anna. And, the result was that others had also to reduce the price to one anna. That daily could not carry on for a long time and had to discontinue.

**Dr. Keskar:** You mean the daily which began the competition?

**Shri C. C. Shah:** Yes; it could not carry on the competition for a long time.

\* I know that the same thing is happening in Bombay for English Dailies.

Some of the English dailies there are incurring heavy losses by carrying on this kind of competition. I do not know for how long they will be able to carry on like this. The game is: either you reach the stage when you kill your competitors and remain the survivor or you do not reach that stage at all.

I will tell the story of the Marathi Press. We also run a Marathi daily. A competitor came in the field in 1949. This new paper is sold at one anna but has large income from crossword. The result was that our daily which was priced at 2 annas had to reduce the price to one anna and we are incurring losses. The paper has been there for many years, I do not know how long we are going to carry on this competition. Either we have to race with the competitors or discontinue to serve the Marathi-speaking public.

My friend Shri Alva mentioned *Navakal* and *Prabhat*. These were long-standing Marathi dailies in the field which had to close down.

Now, what I wish to submit is this. The result of all this is that the economy—I am now confining my observations principally to the language newspapers which are going to be the principal newspapers in this country hereafter—the economy of the well-established newspapers is seriously disturbed, but those newcomers, whether they are adventurers or speculators or people with crossword puzzles or any other motive, come in; they continue for some time this cut-throat competition with the result that either they do not survive or they kill the rest. Other unfair and unhealthy practices are also there to which the Commission has referred. In this state of affairs, my submission is this. My friend, the last speaker—I am sorry he is not here—

**An Hon. Member:** Shri Natesan.

**Shri C. C. Shah:**... yes, Mr. Natesan, mentioned a few reasons to say that there should be no price-page sche-

dule. Price-page schedule does not mean reduction of pages. For example, if my friend wants to give pictorial news on a large scale and wants to have 12 pages in his paper, let him price it at three or four annas instead of one or 1½ anna and if the quality of his paper is very good, if the amount of news which he gives is goods, if the pictures which he gives are such as to attract the readers and the readers are prepared to pay the price of 3 or 4 annas, it is all right. There should be competition in quality with any other paper; then, no doubt, it may be fair. The idea of price-page schedule is not to control the use of newsprint—which was the idea during wartime because we were short of newsprint then; that is not the idea now. The idea is: you allow every paper a fair opportunity, and equal opportunity to serve the public and to live.

He mentioned, for example, that if you do not have more pages, you won't have more advertisements. If there is not more of advertisement, I do not think it will be a great calamity; it may be a calamity for those who live on advertisements only and nothing else. But there won't be any calamity for the public and the advertisements will be distributed all the more amongst the other newspapers more equitably than it is at present.

The other thing he mentioned was—and he was very solicitous about it—that some people would lose employment. Probably he meant the compositors. That is not so. I am speaking from experience, having run these 6 or 7 newspapers for a number of years. When you have a lesser number of pages, the extent of reduction of employment is negligible; it is not even 1 per cent. It would be only for compositors and for none else. Therefore, none of these arguments survives examination.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Does the quality of the paper depend only on the number of pages and not the quality or importance of the leader writer the importance of the editor etc.?

**Shri C. C. Shah:** We have of late what are called quantity papers rather than quality papers.

**An Hon. Member:** Waste papers.

**Shri C. C. Shah:** I do not want to use such a strong word; I am not used to it.

In the face of this controversy I submit that we should not go by the attitude of this paper or that paper. We should go by certain principles, bear in mind the objectives which we wish to have and which we wish to serve. I think the objective should be this. We should first think of a healthy and stable Press, not a Press whose economy is so unstable that we do not know whether a paper which has existed for years will survive tomorrow or not. The economy of the newspaper must be fairly stable for one to embark upon. It must be a healthy Press, not a Press serving or catering to any kind of passions of people.

Then it must be a Press which makes for the freedom of opinion and which does not depend upon the whims of a few who choose to get control of such Press, nor should it depend upon the advertisements principally. For, a Press which has to depend more upon its advertisement, revenue rather than upon the price which it will get from the reader, does not deserve public support.

The third principle which we must have is that it permits the free flow of information. That is a cardinal principle in a democratic organisation or in a democratic State. We have today in our country 330 dailies with a circulation of 26 lakhs, a very poor one compared with what we should have. Out of these 330 dailies, the majority of them, more than half of them, are in metropolitan towns. Even the circulation—50 per cent of it—is only in towns; and the production of these newspapers is also in the metropolitan cities or towns. If we wish to educate people, if we wish that the spirit of democracy should pervade this country, we must try for having as many district newspapers as possible and strive to make it possible that they

[Shri C. C. Shah]

live and survive. That can be done only if there is a fair opportunity for all to survive. I concede that a newcomer with no capital cannot survive. He must provide for some capital. I also concede that a newcomer must be prepared for some initial losses.

But how long and how much is the problem. Does the newcomer ever know whether he will be able to survive? Therefore, I submit that he starts at present with economic disadvantages under the present circumstances. Large-scale newspapers have a low cost of production. They have large advertisement revenues and they have large capital resources. With all these economic disadvantages, it is impossible for a newcomer to survive, and if you wish to effectively serve the countryside, the district and the mofussil, it is imperative for us to devise means by which it will be possible for the newcomer to start a district newspaper. The only argument that can be said against this—and that is the argument of those who oppose this—is that the reader will have to pay a little more. I concede that the reader will have to pay in some cases, not in all, a bit more. But I would wish, though that is the point which I want to make, that it is better that a newspaper is subsidised by the reader than allowed to be controlled by the Press barons or advertisers. I am quite sure that the public or the readers will be prepared to pay even a little more for a free and healthy Press rather than be catered to by a Press of this kind, which does out a large number of pages for which you can have considerable re-sale value. I am not afraid of the argument that it would mean that the reader would have to pay a little more than what he is at present paying. The real argument is this, namely, the point that you, Sir, put to me. We want really quality papers rather than mere waste paper of the kind of thing that we mostly get now. I was reading the other day a survey conducted by the UNESCO the seventeen largest dailies of the world, which had large-sized newspapers. I was also reading a

very instructing book on the Japanese Press and I found that the pages and the size of newspapers in Japan are comparatively small, and yet their circulation is something like 40 lakhs. It is the quality of the paper that counts and...

**Dr. Keskar:** Is that circulation figure of 40 lakhs for one paper?

**Shri C. C. Shah:** Yes, for one paper. Once we begin to introduce the price-page schedule, there will be better editing of the news and greater attention will be paid as to what should be given to the reader and what should not be given to the reader. Today what do we find? Slovenly things and any kind of material are introduced in the paper just to fill in the pages. That is the position both with regard to the language Press and even to a certain extent the English Press, but that is not the position that we want. Sensational news is introduced into several columns of the newspaper in order that more pages may be given. Therefore, my submission is that the price-page schedule is inevitable and necessary if we want to develop a free Press in the country, and I request the hon. Minister not to be carried away by interested propaganda that is being carried on by a few English dailies, whose interest lies in seeing to it that the price-page schedule is not introduced. Otherwise, I must give a warning that the language newspapers will go to the wall and we shall be suffering a great calamity if they go to the wall. Connected with the price-page schedule and other problems, we want to improve the service conditions of the working journalists. Unless you permit the language newspapers to have some income, it will be impossible for them to improve the conditions of the working journalists and it would impose upon them a burden greater than that which they are able to bear today. Without introducing a price-page schedule if you only take measures to improve the service conditions of the working

journalists by increasing their salaries, which they rightly and richly deserve, you will not succeed. The proposals of the Press Commission are an integrated whole and it would be wrong for the Government to take one or another proposal in an isolated manner and leave out the rest, without considering the inter-connection of all. Several hon. Members have already pressed this point and I do not want to say more.

There is one more recommendation about which I wish to say a word, and that is about State trading in newsprint. Our experience has been that the medium-sized and small newspapers live from day to day and with the variable prices of newsprint and the uncertainty about it, they find it extremely difficult to budget their economy. Unless the Government takes some measures which assure them the supply of newsprint at moderate rates under circumstances which are stable, it is not possible for them, in my opinion, to carry on what they are doing now. The majority of the large dailies, which have large capital resources, can afford to buy all their newsprint in advance when the prices are low and hold large stocks. Sometimes they make larger profit in newsprint than they do in newspaper and thus compensate themselves for the competition they carry on with the other newspapers. This has been our experience during the war and post-war periods. After the price went down from £115, as my friend just now said, to £55, it has again risen during the last two years, and, therefore, I commend this proposal for the consideration of the Government.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I now call upon Shri Gurupadaswamy and after him I will call upon Shri Azad. I will give one or two names of the speakers so that they may be in their seats when I call them and I also expect they will sit some time longer in their seats. If necessary, to meet the quorum, I will give out fifteen names. Hon. Members may be brief. I have as many as 30 names on my list so far and some gentlemen have

asked me to preserve their names for Monday. Therefore, hon. Members should try to be brief.

I will give opportunities to journalist Members—that is, Members who have been journalists.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha (Saran East):** Do you know, Sir, who has been a journalist and who has not been?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** That is why I am asking them to lift up their hands or send a chit that they have been journalists.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** You are well informed on this point.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I know Shri Gurupadaswamy has been a journalist.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** Not Shri Natesan.

2 P.M.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** The greatest danger to the Indian journalism is the monopoly or the concentration of the means of information in the hands of a few people. It has really threatened the freedom of our Press. Those who talk of the freedom of the Press and those who want to defend the liberty of the Press should realise whether there are conditions today existing in India which will permit that liberty of the Press. The monopoly or the concentration of the instruments of information in the hands of a few capitalists never would ensure the freedom of the Press. After Independence there has been a growing tendency in this method of monopolising the means of information with a view to control not only the public life but also the policies of the Government. The people who today control the organs of the Press have in mind only to influence public policies, to influence Government and to bring pressure on them to realise their own objectives and with the result, there has been too much of corruption in the distribution and publication of news and views. I feel Sir that the capitalist Press is a corrupt Press. It has become corrupt because of certain tendencies. One is



[Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy]

the monopoly; the other is the capitalist control of the information agencies and the advertising syndicates. Today we cannot say that we have got a free Press. We cannot say that we have got a responsible, sober and a fully nationalist Press. Our Press does not conform to the nationalist ideals; it does not conform to any standards of high journalism nor does it conform to any high standard of public service.

[SHRI BARMAN *in the Chair.*]

The most important thing that the Government should do is to see that the concentration of the means of information in the hands of a few is broken. My hon. friend, Dr. Keskar, may say: "How to do it?" Without indulging in verbal argument I may draw his attention to the press laws in some of the foreign countries. In France, it is an offence for anybody to own more than one paper. In the USA, there is a law—Sherman Act—according to which it is a crime to have chains, groups or monopolies in the Press. However there have been violations. In the case of Switzerland, owning more than one paper is a penal offence. I can quote any number of instances from foreign countries, but it is enough if we know that in certain progressive western countries, a law limiting the number of papers that one individual can hold is in operation. In India we do not have such a law. Unfortunately the Press has been completely left to the vagaries and whimsical fancies of a few individual barons. The result is that a few people who have got big money bags have been controlling and owning a large number of papers with the result that people who have got no money but only zeal have not been able to come forward and succeed in starting papers. Unless we fix a limit as has been done in some countries, we would not be able to check this development.

The Press Commission has suggested some other ways. It says that group or multiple publications and monopolies are bad. It admits that they

are bad but it provides only for regulation. It does not fix the responsibility of limiting the number of papers that one can hold on the Government. It is Government's responsibility to say how many papers one individual or one group or one trust or corporation or company can hold.

I am only dealing with such aspects which Government ought to deal with; I am only dealing with such questions which Government have to tackle. There are other things and other drawbacks in the Press and I do not want to dwell upon them because they are not relevant and we should concentrate our attention on questions to which Government should address itself.

About the price-page schedule, much has been said by Shri C. C. Shah. It is very interesting that there has been too much of activity and canvassing in the lobby for organising opinion against this price-page schedule. People are seen busy convincing and discussing with the Members of Parliament. I hear them saying: "If you introduce this, it would be ruinous to the industry; certain papers have to close down; there may be retrenchment, etc." They have raised this cry of retrenchment with a view to frighten the employees. But I know that if we introduce the price-page schedule, it will never mean anything to anybody; it will never ruin industry; it will never lead to retrenchment. On the other hand more papers will come to the field. I may give you arguments in support of this contention. Take for example a paper which has got 12 pages and quotes only two annas or one anna. If there is a price-page schedule, and if we were to say that an eight page paper should quote two annas—neither less nor more—what will happen? Then, the paper has to consider the advertisement space that it should contain; it has to consider also how much space should be devoted to the editorial, how much for the news,—for the international news, for the national news,

for regional news,—for photos and for other things. It has to plan out the space. Today Indian journalism suffers from the same handicap as the Government—that is lack of planning. Indian journalism is in a chaotic state because there is no planning. If there is anything called planning, it is only planning in a planless state. If we fix up a price-page schedule, it will mean order and stability. Then, Sir, some may raise the question of circulation. It may be said: "If you give less number of pages it may mean less number of readers." It is not so. I was a journalist and I am a journalist. I have tried so many experiments. I have given more pages and also less pages keeping the same price throughout. Giving more pages did not increase my circulation and giving less pages did not in any way affect my circulation. It all depends upon the standard of journalism. It all depends on the reputation of the paper. It is not the amount of rubbish that we put in the paper but the quality of material we publish which is the criterion on which depends the circulation of the paper. Therefore, it is absolutely nonsensical to say that by reducing the number of pages we will be reducing the number of readers. Moreover, you have to take into consideration the number of potential readers available in the country. When the commerce and industry is developing, when the development activities are taking place all over the country and when the people are being educated more and more, there is a greater scope for the expansion of the reading clientele. Therefore, I say that this cry that fixing of the price-page formula would lead to the cutting down of circulation is without foundation and it cannot be based on facts or evidence.

I, therefore, feel that by placing a limit on the pages and the price that a paper should have, we will be helping the other papers. Today, you know, that advertisement is limited. The expansion of advertisement is not very fast. Our advertisers are very conservative and they do not believe in much advertisement. If at all they

do any advertisement they do only bad ones. Therefore, if the advertisement space is controlled and it is rationed out then there will be surplus advertisements available for other regional and small papers which generally do not get any advertisement. Today some papers are overflowing with advertisement and some others are starving without advertisement. There is 'starvation Press' and there is 'rich Press'—rich because they get advertisement. They get advertisement because those papers have got long standing, they have huge capital resources and they have fairly good circulation. But, the other papers have no standing, no capital resources and they cannot effectively compete with the 'big Press'. Therefore, they suffer for want of circulation and they also suffer in the matter of advertisement. In the circumstances, if you fix up a price-page schedule it will be a boom to the industry in general. It will be great benefit for the improvement of the industry because the surplus advertisements that will be available from big papers would be distributed to regional and small papers. I, therefore, say that there is all good in this price-page schedule and I wholeheartedly go for it. I want the Minister to make himself bold to come out with a statement. He should take it up and the Government should fix up this price-page schedule.

There are one or two other important things relevant to the subject which I want to bring up before the House. That is about the advertising agencies. Today, nearly 5 advertising agencies are controlling the majority of advertising material. Those who are in the good books of these advertising agencies get advertisements. Nearly about Rs. 5 crores worth of advertisements are available per annum for the Press in India. Only a few papers, especially the English papers, enjoy the monopoly of advertisement. Here again there is monopoly. There is monopoly in respect of circulation and there is monopoly in respect of advertisement. Certain papers which enjoy one monopoly enjoy the other monopoly also.

[Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy]

So, there is a sort of alliance, unholy alliance, between advertisement groups and the big barons in the industry. Therefore, I say, that if you want a dispersal of advertisements, and distribution of advertisements to all the papers on a fair basis the first thing that we have to consider is the price-page schedule. The other thing, as I said, is that we must see that the advertising agencies—advertising bureaux or syndicates, whatever they are called—distribute the advertisements to all papers. The material for advertisements must be pooled and unless that pool is distributed rationally and on a fair basis subject to the considerations of the standard of the paper reading clientele and the territory to which a paper caters, it will prove to be a great hardship to small papers.

Here, I am pained to point out that the Government is the worst sinner. The Government, particularly the Information and Broadcasting Ministry which is dealing with advertisements, has not been able to evolve a principle for distribution of advertisements. I think I am correct when I say that the Government gives about Rs. 47 lakhs worth of advertisements every year and these advertisements mostly go to a certain group of papers.

**Mr. Chairman:** Does it not depend on circulation?

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** Circulation also depends on so many other things.

**Dr. Keskar:** Are you referring to the Central Government or State Governments?

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** Central Government.

**Dr. Keskar:** Then I think the figure is incorrect.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** May be, I am speaking subject to correction. Any way, circulation depends on other factors. If you want more circulation then you should break these giant monopolies which are operating in the Press. You must put a limit and say

that one should hold only a certain amount of papers and not more than that. You can say that each man should hold only one paper and not more than that. Unless you take comprehensive measures in all these respects it is not possible to expect that a paper would get circulation numbering a lakh of copies. What is our total circulation? It is only about 27 lakhs or so of all the papers put together. So, in circulation we may say that our papers do not compare well with the circulation of papers in America or other western countries. Therefore, what I say is that you should not judge a paper by its circulation for giving advertisements.

**Dr. Keskar:** If I may interrupt for a minute. He has probably forgotten that about six or nine months back, I placed a statement on the Table of the House, giving the criterion on which we give advertisements, and there we have expressly said that simply the standard of the paper will not be and is not a criterion for giving advertisements, but that the standard and the journalistic status of the paper and many other things will be, and are, taken into consideration.

**Shri V. G. Deshpande:** Party affiliation?

**Shri Joachim Alva:** Will the Government also take note that the Government of India advertisements should not be handled by foreign firms?

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** May I again point out that it should not be taken as a criterion? You say that should be one of the points. I say that should not be the point because circulation can be boosted up. Suppose today I start a paper with crossword puzzles, and not only crosswords but with sensational stories of the private lives of the queens of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, circulation may be boosted up. It happened. I have done it sometimes.

**Shri S. S. More:** Or of the stories of Ministers.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** I realised later on that it was wrong and I

retraced my steps. It is possible to boost up circulation by unfair means.

**Dr. Keskar:** I can understand that undue importance should not be given to the question of circulation, but how can one say that it should not be taken into consideration at all? One paper might have a circulation of five hundred and may go only to a few people and it may be said that this paper cannot be treated on a par with another paper of the same standing or status but with a larger circulation. It should be one point but it should not be the most important point. There, I agree.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** Circulation may be taken into consideration as a point when there are equal opportunities for papers to grow and develop. Today there are uneven conditions. There is cut-throat competition among papers, and there has been too much of concentration of papers in a few hands. So, in the existing atmosphere, if you take circulation as a basis for giving advertisements, then I think many papers will have to go to the wall and especially so because advertisement is the most important means of revenue for a paper.

**Shri S. S. More:** Are advertisements to be used for the purpose of subsidising weakest papers?

**Dr. Keskar:** I have noted the point and shall reply to it at the proper state.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** About advertisements I need hardly say that most Indian papers contain obscene and vulgar advertisements.

**Shri S. S. More:** There is demand.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** I know of several types of advertisements. When I was engaged on a particular paper, an advertisement came to me. The advertisement was like this: "Wear this magic ring. You will attract any lady on the street". That was the advertisement.

**Shri S. S. More:** What is your experience about the ring?

**Mr. Chairman:** I should just remind the speaker that he should finish soon.

There are 31 Members who are desirous of speaking on this subject. So, all Members who are called upon to speak will kindly economise on time as much as possible.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** I will require about eight minutes.

**Mr. Chairman:** No; he will have three minutes more and must finish by then.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** All right. I shall finish in five minutes. I was quoting a sample of bad advertisement. I said it was wrong and I refused to publish it. But do you know what happened? The person went to the proprietor and the proprietor instructed the advertisement manager to publish that advertisement, and he said that the editor has no business to interfere in regard to the publication of advertisement. I had to keep quiet. The advertisement was published. There was another advertisement saying: "Kill bugs without expense. Please correspond by sending one anna stamp". I protested against its publication but it was published because the proprietor wanted to publish it. When a particular person wrote a letter with the stamp enclosed, he got a reply as to how to kill all the bugs easily without expense. What was the remedy suggested? The solution was: take two stones, keep the bugs on one stone and kill them with the other stone. That is the advertisement. I have got so many things to say on this because I have come across so many such advertisements. I only say that we must have an advertisement code. In some of the foreign countries, they have evolved rules for advertisements and similar rules may be framed here under the law. There must be a statute under which rules may be framed, in order to prevent obscene advertisements. I have got here some of the rules governing advertisements and they say that if the advertisement does offend the sense of decency, is dishonest or false, the advertiser is punishable. We have not provided for the punishment of such advertisers. Have we? Is there any specific law?

[Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy]

Of course there may be a general law under which advertisements may be dealt with, but is there any specific law to punish bad advertisers? There is much advertisement of drugs, medicines and all sorts of things. I think a law should be framed in this respect.

Lastly I must say something about the working journalists. The life of a working journalist is worst than the life of a dog today. I know some of the friends who are sitting in the gallery above may be drawing fat salaries; and they may be attached to the big Press, and naturally they may be drawing fat salaries, but only for a period of time till they are kicked out. But in most of the cases the conditions of the working journalists are worse than the conditions of a cattle-shed. I know from my own experience how the journalist works. In the report it is said that the average number of hours that the journalists put in varies between six and nine. I think it is entirely incorrect. I know cases where journalists work from morning till night, or from the afternoon till the next morning,—12 or 13 hours a day and getting only Rs. 40, Rs. 50 or Rs. 60.

An. Hon. Member: Today?

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: Yes, today. He is asked not only to perform journalistic duties but also to perform certain other duties by the proprietor. For instance, the proprietor says: "There is a railway parcel or a wagon-load of soap or something. Please take delivery of it". The journalist has to do that. So I say the salary and the working conditions are all unsatisfactory and I repeat that the average life of a journalist is just a little better than that of a beggar. Unfortunately today journalists are divided: their Organisations have been divided. Why? Because the capitalists do not like their organisations or unions. The Journalists suffer from handicap. They are not given any contract form and there is no security of service. All these things can be regulated through law. I say if the Government takes this

matter seriously we can provide a minimum wage as suggested by the Commission. We can also provide for security of tenure, for gratuity, bonus and such other conditions which are necessary for civilised existence. None of these things prevails today because the Press barons have completely exploited the helplessness of the journalists. I want very immediate action to be taken in this matter so that the journalists may live a very honourable life. Journalism cannot be noble unless the journalist is noble. A journalist cannot be noble unless he is free from all ignoble conditions in which he is now working. Unless he is very free from ignoble conditions, free from these hedges and fetters, there cannot be free journalism and there cannot be freedom of the Press. Unless this is done, there is no hope for journalism, no hope for independent Press. I appeal to the Government to take immediate steps to ameliorate the conditions of the journalists.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: Since this report was published, I was wondering whether there would be any upright and honest man in this country who can bless or praise this report, because I cannot speak with that experience of half a century in the bar of public life as some others have; I am not a journalist like my friend Shri Gurupadaswamy, the circulation of whose paper did not go up or down in spite of the best efforts taken by him nor I am a trustee like some other learned friends of mine. But going through the Commission's report, I found it was revealing to me, and felt that it would be so for the thousands and millions of people in this country who know very little of what happens behind and inside the Press, this newspaper industry. But there came a Daniel, an honest man, to this House who gave us five principles—*Pancha Sutra*, which will help us to decide what this Press Commission Report is. Unfortunately that honest gentleman, the Daniel who came for judgment, is not in the House.

He told us: do not read too much of the newspapers, that is the first principle; only read the head lines, that is the second principle; save the rich, then you will be able to save the poor; there should be no corporation, let individuals and the big barons exploit as much as they want, then there will be good opinion in this country; and there is no mis-carriage of justice in the P.T.I. and the U.P.I. These were the five principles that that learned man gave us in this House. It is only once in a century or two that such big persons, or great prophets come to give life to the land and this we got from him.

Applying those five principles, where does our objective of a socialist pattern of society stand? How will I be able to evolve that objective which is most dear to my heart—the socialist pattern of society which has been enunciated by the All India Congress Committee at Avadi and unanimously accepted by this House last December.

It has been said that the defects in the management of the P.T.I. have been rectified. May I in this connection ask a question. Did the so-called rectifications take place before the submission of this report or after the submission of this report? Is it not a fact that the report of the commission has clearly established the bungling and the charges of misappropriation against certain of the directors, though these are still being denied? Is it not a fact that those amounts have been written off? Is it not a fact that such persons against whom specific charges had been brought have been promoted to directorships? With these questions I leave off that subject.

In the opinion of the public of this country, without a single dissident voice, excepting of those who are interested in their profits, the administrative hierarchy, the managerial mismanagement, the directors' diehardness and the proprietors' profit-motive have given us very little chance to know the economic secrets,—of what is happening inside. Therefore, this report which has come to us after a thorough enquiry and great labour

by certain eminent persons of this country has given us staggering and revealing facts. The people of this country are now convinced that if we want to establish democracy, if we want to have a socialist pattern of society, we must have a healthy Press, we must allow free and good conditions to the newspapers in this country.

The Report of the Commission has pointed out that except in the capitals and big cities which are dominated by big barons, in small towns, in small district headquarters like mine, there is not even one paper, there is no railway line, there is nothing worth mentioning which could guide the opinion of the people.

**Shri Achuthan** (Cranganur):  
There are good people like you!

**Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad**: I am thankful for the compliment of my friend. In this country, as the Commission, have pointed out about 20 persons control and regulate the views of 80 per cent of the people. By this I mean it is 15 plus 5 'honest' men guiding 50 plus 30 (80 per cent) of the public. So, for persons like me who read only the headlines and do not read in between the lines, it will be difficult still more to find out what happens. Therefore, these 20 persons control and regulate public opinion in this country.

The Press Commission have also pointed out the underhand tricks that the managements of these big owner-ships are playing to kill the small papers or to put them in an imbalanced economic state. They also found that some of the existing method of ownership, management and control, were not conducive to the objective presentation of facts. I would not like to go into details. It is pointed out how the insecurity of service and low wages and lack of leave facilities and retirement benefits have put down those who are in the profession to such conditions from where they cannot give objective presentation of facts and views to the public. It is, therefore, essential that conditions should be established which will give the

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practioners of the profession facilities which will enable them to do the duties that are cast on them.

I do not wish to stress the Commissions' recommendations relating to Government's advertisement policy and tariff. Government have welcomed the report generally. But the bone of contention lies in two particular points on which I want to emphasise. I would also like hon. Members of this House to muster public opinion to force the hands, or strengthen the hands of Government to implement them against the bullying tactics of the vested interests in this country, who are canvassing support inside the lobby as well as outside. The bullying tricks that have been played by the vested interests against the Press Commission Report are very clear to us. Therefore there is nothing unnatural that this House, the sovereign body of this country, has unanimously, with one voice, has decided to strengthen the hands of the Minister to implement these recommendations in toto. These two difficulties are the price page schedule and the minimum wage.

I cannot present to the House a better picture than what my hon. friend Shri C. C. Shah has done. Being a trustee of a group of papers in this country he has given a very effective picture of how these big barons are trying to create such conditions, so that these language papers may be sent to the wall where they will die a natural death. I would now like to point out what is happening all over the country after the submission of the Report of the Press Commission.

The working journalists who for a long time have been suffering have sent us literature about their conditions. Their veracity have not up till now been challenged by anybody. They have pointed out that retrenchment is going on; threats of closure of papers are going on; on one plea or the other working journalists are asked to retire or compulsorily made

to proceed on leave. What is happening in Ahmedabad, Gujerat and Bombay are known to us all. We know that in Ahmedabad the *Gujerat Samachar* and *Sandesh* were selling for two annas. There comes a big man, with his bag full of money, but with not the slightest idea of the newspaper industry, to start a new paper, with crossword competitions. He earns lakhs and lakhs; he reduces the price of the paper to one anna and thereby forces the most established language paper which was serving that area for forty or fifty years to go to the wall and to close down. Others who are there may not survive unless in the interests of justice and honesty, the recommendations of the Press Commission are implemented by the Government. In Surat three morning dailies and three evening dailies closed, because there came another big man with money, behind him and started this cross-word competition and reduced the price. Thus, all over the country not only before the submission of the Press Commission's report, but even after that, all these things are going on.

A correspondent in Simla announced in a big poster, "Look here, buy my paper; you will get more worth by selling the waste." We do not know what happened to the correspondent, but the fact remains that all these big barons are out to out do and outdistance such small language papers which are sincerely serving the people not out of any profit motive, but out of their desire to serve the national interest, so dear to their heart. In this way instances can be multiplied. We want to point out by these that if the recommendation regarding the price-page schedule is not implemented by the Government, whatever recommendations of the Press Commission are accepted, they will not be worth having. We strongly feel that if the Government does not implement this particular recommendation of the Press Commission, then in the crossword competition, other papers which are sincerely serving the country will be thrown to the wall and only a very

small number of papers, 15 or 20, will continue. We know that there only 20 owners who are controlling 81 per cent of the papers and therefore we strongly emphasise and assert that this particular recommendation of the Press Commission must be implemented.

The second point which is of the utmost importance and which threatens the existing papers is the minimum wage. We are told that attempts are being made to defy the working journalists on this point. Distinction is being made between North India and South India. It is said that in South India journalists working in Travancore-Cochin where there is so much of literacy will have to pay the largest premium of literacy. The mentality is that those who are more educated, those who can serve the industry better, will have to pay a premium by accepting less wages. What a nice argument given by the vested interests in this country! We feel that if you want to create a healthy tradition, if you want to create condition in which a healthy democracy can function, in which our friends, our budding flowers, our fine young men who are trying to put their soul and energy to serve this industry can discharge their responsibilities properly, then this minimum wage recommendation should be implemented. It is nothing new. The Uttar Pradesh Government and the Madhya Pradesh Government had set up committees for this purpose; they went through it and they have recommended what should be the minimum which should be given to the working journalists. That is there and I do not want to go into the details of it. What they have recommended is there—Rs. 125 with dearness allowance differing according to the nature of the place, whether it is a cosmopolitan town or a small town etc. Therefore, we feel that if you want to improve the condition of the working journalists who are handicapped not in one way, but in all possible ways that these proprietors can devise, they should be given all possible facilities. We do not want to make a class of capitalists of

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them; they never claim it; they never want it. They only want conditions in which a human intellect can exist, function and discharge its responsibilities. Their present condition will be clear to this House if we compare them with the journalists in other countries. If you know how many persons are working in the Japanese daily. *Asahi* and how many are on the editorial staff, then the position will be clear. There are 6,550 total employees in this paper, out of which 1938 are on the editorial staff. In *New York Times* out of a total of 4,550 employees, 805 are on the editorial staff. What is the editorial strength of the papers of our country? The entire editorial strength of our country will be the same as the editorial strength of a single paper in Japan or U.S.A. If you compare the condition of our journalists with the condition of the journalists in other countries, it will be clear that for the reduced pay and other reduced facilities, our journalists are discharging proportionately far greater responsibilities and duties than what is done in Japan or U.S.A. Why this partiality for 8 per cent of employees? The vested interests are there preventing the minimum wage being given to the working journalists. I will now quote figures from the *Industrial Labour in India* published by the Employer's Association, Calcutta. It shows the increase in the annual earnings of the 92 per cent workers in the paper and printing industry, except the 8 per cent working journalists, from 1939 to 1952. From Rs. 332.7 in 1939, it increased to Rs. 728.5 in 1947, Rs. 911.5 in 1949, Rs. 1,029.1 in 1951 and Rs. 1,121.7 in 1952. While there has been an increase in the annual earnings from Rs. 332.7 to Rs. 1,121.7 of 92 per cent of the employees, what about the remaining 8 per cent working journalists? All these cries are being thrown to the winds only to dupe those who want that the condition of the working journalists should be brought at least to the minimum wage level.

Sir, we should not speak about PTI



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and the UPI. They are the so-called national agencies now. We had been told by those fine men who are working in PTI that PTI represents poverty, injustice and tyranny and that UPI means useless, pathetic and insulting. A corporation has been recommended for PTI, but what are they doing? It is just going the other way. It should not be commendatory, but the Government should force on the PTI which claims to be a national agency to form the corporation. It had been recommended that there should be a committee to look after the working of the UPI. But what is being done is, UPI is in the hand of one business magnate who is a cotton merchant of Bombay and he is the one man virtually controlling it. It is said that three directors will control the destiny of the UPI, but that is only on paper. Actually this one man, the cotton merchant, has been given the power to veto the other two directors. He has given loan to the UPI, but that money is secure. This man who is gambling in the market will now control the circulation of the news sent out by the UPI. If these are the conditions in the newspapers, in the P.T.L., and the U.P.I., there is no chance for the growth of healthy public opinion in this country. Therefore, I strongly assert that the price page schedule and the minimum wage must be implemented. As regards the other recommendations, we are thankful to the Government for having brought a small legislation in the House and I hope all the recommendations will be implemented *in toto*. All Members of this House except one dissenting from the other side and the entire public opinion in the country is behind the Minister. We are behind him in the implementation of the price page schedule and the minimum wage recommendations, so that public opinion may grow and democracy can function, and function effectively in this country.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** Our friend Shri Natesan has given me enough provocation to stand up and to set things right.

**An. Hon. Member:** Don't attack.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** I won't attack. He has used only one word in Hindi, perhaps the first word in his life—that was 'gadbadh' in his Madrasi accent. I put it on paper and what I have understood from it is: 'G' for Goenka, 'A' for Agarwal, 'D' for Dalmia, 'B' for Birla, 'A' for Amrit Bazaar Patrika, 'D' for Dharbhanga group of papers and 'H' for the Hindu. Nobody could have voiced in one word all the press barons so nicely as our friend has done. I pay him my best compliments. There is no doubt about it that these seven letters stand for the first letter of the names of the supreme press barons of our country today. It is they who command the largest circulation of all the papers in our country. Perhaps, it would not be an exaggeration to say that in some way or other, they monopolies about 40 per cent of the circulation. Let us see with what justification they carry on this work.

Concentration of newspapers in our country has reached an alarming level. No doubt, newspapers are terrific weapons and if they are to be in the hands of irresponsible people, they can make and un-make many things, not only in the political but also in intellectual life. They form the general standards of the people. I shall revert once more to my personal grievances which I have against these press barons, as Dada called them in his speech yesterday; but I shall come to that later.

**Acharya Kripalani (Bhagalpur cum Purnea):** There were better words used by Shri H. N. Mukerjee.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** I do not remember; if you will kindly remind me, I shall be glad.

**An. Hon. Member:** Thugs and pindaris.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** Yes; thugs and pindaris. A better word 'gadbadh' has been given to me by my hon. friend Shri Natesan. He has put in a nutshell

the whole newspaper world. I shall revert to 'gadbadh' also later on.

First and foremost, calmly, quietly, dispassionately, and objectively, I would like to enumerate one by one the deeds or misdeeds of these press barons who are managing the largest circulation. We have not to go very far. We have to look into the Press Commission's report. Before, that I must say that we are very grateful to the working journalists who have brought all these facts at the cost of suffering, at the cost of their job, security and many other hardships, before the Press Commission.

The press barons use the press for their personal benefit. The first motive is money. Here is an instance where one industrial magnate, who owns several jute mills and also a chain of newspapers, in his commercial columns tried to cheat the public in such a refined way that the public thought his firm was doing so well that the shares had gone very high, which was not a fact at all on that day. These commercial columns have been used for personal ends. That is No. 1.

I can enumerate many examples in different fields of life. One example is in politics. Not even our Prime Minister has been spared. During the last elections, one newspaper magnate from Bombay sent a special correspondent to his constituency in Allahabad with a definite direction that he should report from there that the Prime Minister had no chance of coming to the House of the People, that his opponent was much stronger and that public opinion was much more in favour of his opponent. When this report reached Bombay, the agency reports contradicting it also reached Bombay. One of the newspaper editors under this owner did not publish the news which was sent at the direction of that owner. For that reason, he was reprimanded. This case also is found in this book. This was twisting of facts about the Prime Minister's popularity in that locality. Everybody will agree with me that this was a wrong thing and

should not have been done. Let us go to another field. They do not stop there. They call themselves nationalists. Healthy nationalists. Let us see their activities. One paper in Calcutta had three times more circulation in East Bengal than it had in India. Why was it so? Because, from East Bengal from where our Chairman comes, I suppose,.....

**Some Hon. Members:** He is from West Bengal.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** Excuse me. They are neighbours. You will remember, being very near them, that in 1950 and 1951 times were very hard for the refugees. Large number of refugees used to come from East Bengal to West Bengal, Howrah and other places were filled with them. At that time, what did this paper do? It followed the policy of East Pakistan in order to have three times more circulation there. Of course, it is a nationalist paper: is it not?

Not only this. Some chains of papers make pacts with foreign countries. Some chains of papers made a pact with the Goa administrators to increase their circulation. Are they not nationalists? Of course, they are. These are just two or three instances about their activities in different fields. You will say that these are past instances. No, Sir. In the present circumstances, even two days ago, after the firing took place in Goa, you read a very popular Delhi newspaper. What news did you see? If you are a newspaperman you will see that perhaps more than three-fourths of the news was published from foreign sources. What sources were utilised? I was just startled when I read one heading. Perhaps, it was the day before yesterday evening that I read, Western Europe was unsympathetic towards India in this Goa firing case. I at once rushed to some of my friends in the Embassies here to check this. They had received reports from their own press which were contradictory. They said that what this press said was wrong and that it was dirty gutter press. It is called *Journal de Geneve*.

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Similarly, there is another called *Tribune de Geneve*. Very few read these papers in Switzerland. I know that in Switzerland the best read paper is *Neue Zuericher Zeitung*. But they have not quoted it. From the gutter press they took out a paper which opposed us because it was in the pay of Salazar, and then they repeated the same thing here in India that Western Europe is against Indian aspirations about Goa. This is not a stray case.

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**Shri Joachim Alva:** They are papers which follow their Governments which have never declared in favour of India as against the Portuguese in Goa.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** I do not follow your argument, but anyhow let us see. My mind is working in this way.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** I said that they are papers which follow their Governments.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** But the Swiss Government is not following the policy of this *Journal de Geneve* or the *Tribune de Geneve*. If you know it is the gutter press and it has no position in Switzerland at all.

I will continue. The point which I was going to make was this. If some news is supplied to our newspapers which is cheap and which does not cost them much, it is published. Whether it is sent by Salazar or anybody else they will publish it in bold type in their papers. That is wrong. That should not be done. But why is it so? Of course, they are nationalist newspapers, no doubt. They call themselves nationalists. Of course, we have to placate them, flatter them; otherwise, we are nowhere in politics. That is what the press bosses think. They claim to have this much power in their hands. These instances will make it clear why they do not hesitate in taking sides even with the opponents of the country at a time of emergency. This is their role. If it suits their

purpose, if they can earn that way, they can go to any length. Perhaps, I may put it that way, they may make a pact with Satan or the devil itself if it brings them money. Such is the role of the magnates. This is the actual position of our country and the role of the newspaper barons. In order to stop them, there must be a check first and therefore we have to go to the roots.

Here, this is the report of the Press Commission which has for the first time given a clear picture of the present situation, put forward certain suggestions and recommendations which if implemented, will improve the situation in the country. Their recommendations are various, but I will take only a few.

First I will take the news agencies, P.T.I. for example. I must make a distinction between the working journalists who work for the P.T.I. and its management. If you ask me about the first I have the highest respect for them, for their technique, for their capacity to observe. I pay my compliments to them, but I have to say something about the management, about the directors who control this agency. Of course, they will not like to hear these comments, but we all are sons of Gandhiji. We also used to call him Babu. Therefore, self-criticism is not bad. It should be accepted. But, if anything is said against the P.T.I. either in this House or outside or in the Commission, it is totally blacked out by that agency. Yesterday Acharya Kripalani said something about P.T.I. but it has not come out in the agency report today in the press. Have they a right to do that? In all fairness they should have put it. And therefore what Acharya Kripalani did not elaborate on I will do in two or three minutes and tell you what harm they are doing today to the country. They are suppressing criticism about themselves. That is not enough. Also what they do is that they utilise this largest instrument, largest source of information, for their personal benefit. There are instances

of that. Just these seven people control most of the P.T.I. management, and what do they do? They have a very refined way of doing things. A simple calculation will make it clear. You look at the circulation of the paper, how much money it will bring.

Sir, I find that you are ringing the bell. Is half an hour over?

**Mr. Chairman:** Not half an hour. Half an hour is the extreme limit. I am limiting the speeches to 20 minutes. He has already taken 15 minutes. Five minutes more.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** I am sorry. I was under the impression that I will get half an hour. Because I have got some very important points to make I would request you to let me have some more time. If I do not make any points you may ask me to sit down.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is not necessary that everybody should make every point.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** If they are important ones, you should concede it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Ten minutes more.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** Thank you very much.

Now, about the P.T.I. I was telling you, that a simple calculation will show that these big press barons, these magnates, according to their circulation, pay as subscription to this news agency only one to two per cent, whereas the district paper has to pay for the same news service about 20 per cent or even more in certain cases. This is the policy of the directors of the P.T.I. because their interests is concentrated in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. They are not interested in the growth of newspapers in other places. Rather, they want to bar the way of other newspapers coming into the field. Therefore, they want to make it more difficult for the district newspapers to survive.

Another thing that the P.T.I. does is the classification of scheduled and non-scheduled centres. The same B class news which will cost a paper in Delhi about Rs. 1,000 will cost Rs. 2,500 at Jaipur for a newspaper. Therefore,

what the Press Commission has suggested is that the newspapers should pay their royalty to the news agency according to their circulation. This is a very wise recommendation, and I think that our Government should accept it.

Another recommendation is that the control should be taken away from the hands of the present directors and a public corporation should be formed. That is also a very wise recommendation indeed.

I have nothing to say about yellow journalism because there is a growing tendency towards that and if I narrate, it will take me several hours. Therefore, I ship over it. What I expect from our newspapers is not a large amount of rubbish, but some good news of high standard, only a few pages. That will be enough for us, and not a number of pages. Why do these people not give this? There is an reason behind it. I will give you an illustration.

A few weeks ago I went to see a press and there I knew the man who was manager formerly, but now he has become the managing editor as it is the tendency in the press today. He took me round the press. When we went to the teleprinter, he said: "Look here. With the help of this machine we can forego all the editorial staff here. What for are they? On machine everything comes. Just give it to the linotypist and everything will be all right. The newspaper will come." This is the mentality whereby they want to save through the machine. The thing comes on the machine, and machine-like it is sold and that way they want to mechanise our intellect also. If you calculate in this way, you will find that there are only 7 per cent of personnel, working journalists, who are employed in the newspaper industry of India, whereas in other countries you will find, in Japan or in America, the percentage is about 20 to 22. These people say: "If we pay something more to the journalist, we will have to close our shops." Let us see what they do about the newsprint. If I am not wrong, every press has to pay

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about 45 per cent of the total income from circulation. Fortyfive per cent they pay for newsprint. Formerly, the price of newsprint was about £50. During the Korean war it shot up to £115. Still the man has to pay. Now, they give commission to the hawkers of 33 per cent. Sometimes they give even 50 per cent. Still they survive. But if these working journalists who are the soul and heart of the paper on whom the standard of the paper depends, demands lightly more and say that their share is due to them, then the heavens will fall and the papers will go to ruin. A very strange reasoning it is. No doubt, our magnates, our press barons would not like to change this stage of affairs. These are not to their liking. Of course, they are not.

Press barons think that they are controlling the whole public opinion of India. Let us see the correct position.

There are only 7 per cent of people in the whole of India, who see newspapers; I do not say they read they only see that there is something like a newspaper and it is being sold. 93 per cent of the people do not know anything about it. Of these 7 per cent of the people who see newspapers, only a very small fraction read them; and the number of persons who read English newspapers is still less. And yet there is too much emphasis in our country on English newspapers. The lot of those people who work in vernacular papers is very bad, because these press barons have their main interest in English papers. As an extra income which comes to them by advertisement and other sources, they append the vernacular papers also with the English. What do they pay the people in the vernacular papers? If they keep 12 people for a job in a English newspaper, then they keep only one-third of that number in the vernacular newspapers. The correspondents of these vernacular newspapers are also paid very low. Why should that be so? It is all to gag and just to stop the progress of the country, and the progress of

literacy so far as reading of newspapers and other things connected are concerned. There is a big check on the growth of healthy journalism in our country, and that is the greatest crime which these people are committing today. Unless that is removed, I do not think there is any hope in the country for healthy journalism.

As for criticism, they do not like criticism. But I remember that criticism is also very useful sometimes. Before comparing our press with the press in other countries, I would like to point out that in Russia, for example, the people used to say six months ago:

"*Ne Pravada B Izvestie, I Izvestie B Pravadu*".

In Russia, there are two newspapers. One is called *Pravada*, and the other is called *Izvestia*. *Pravada* means truth, and *Izvestia* means news. But the people used to say that there was no truth in the news and that there was no news in the truth. This criticism was felt by the Russian Government to such an extent that today they have changed their policy to a certain extent, and of course, there is some healthy tendency today in their newspapers also.

Therefore, with this criticism, as our friend has made, this GADBADH, I think, should be made quite popular in the whole of India, so that they may know who is responsible for GADBADH. If you put PTI also with it as it is today, it will sound GADBADHPTI.

**Shri Natesan:** On a point of order. I was not here at the time some speakers referred to what I spoke. From their speeches, it looks as if I used the word *gadbadh*. I would like the records to be checked up, because I do not recollect having used that word. I do not want any hon. Member to use the word *gadbadh* and impute some names also. (*Interruptions*).

**Mr. Chairman:** There is no point of order. Now, the hon. Member Dr. S. N. Sinha's time is up.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** Just one second more, and I shall conclude. (*Interruptions*).

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member has taken more than twenty minutes already, and he must conclude now.

**Dr. S. N. Sinha:** Anyway, it is not my habit to challenge the Chairman. I conclude the recommendations of the Press Commission should be implemented quickly.

श्री एम० पी० मिश्र (मुंगेर उत्तर-पश्चिम) : आपको मालूम है कि इस सभा में जब जब प्रेस की बात आई, जब जब सरकार ने प्रेस के बारे में-अखबारों के बारे में-कुछ करने को तय किया, तब तब इस सभा में एक तूफान—सा उठ खड़ा हुआ कि सरकार प्रेस पर हाथ नहीं उठा सकती। चारों तरफ से आवाज उठी कि सरकार को अखबारों की आजादी पर, समाचारपत्रों की आजादी पर, हाथ उठाने का कोई अधिकार नहीं है। बहुत जोर जोर से इस प्रकार की बातें कही गईं। इस सभा के माननीय सदस्यों को मालूम है कि यह सभा कतई नहीं चाहती कि देश को जो आजादी प्राप्त है, जो नागरिक स्वाधीनता प्राप्त है, समाचारपत्रों की, विचारों की, राय रखने की जो स्वाधीनता है, उस पर वह हाथ उठाए। सरकार इस स्वाधीनता में हस्तक्षेप न करे, यह इस सभा की पुरानी और पक्की राय है। लेकिन आज वही सभा बहुत जोर से चारों तरफ से बोल रही है कि सरकार अखबारों के मामले में दस्त-अन्दाजी करे, अखबारों के बारे में सरकार यह करे, वह करे—और उसका आधार प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट है। यह एक अजीब और उलटी सी बात दिखाई देती है। लेकिन मैं आप से कहना चाहता हूँ कि जिस विचार से, जिस उद्देश्य से, पुराने समय में यह सभा कहती थी कि सरकार को विचारों की स्वाधीनता में, लोगों की इस आजादी में कि वे अखबारों के जरिये, सभाओं के जरिये, जिस तरह से चाहे अपने विचार रख सकें, सरकार दस्त-अन्दाजी न करे दखल न दे, ठीक उसी उद्देश्य से, उसी विचार को अपने सामने रख कर आज यह सभा

कह रही है कि सरकार कुछ ऐसा काम करे कि इस देश में यह स्वाधीनता कायम रह सके, विचारों की आजादी की रक्षा हो सके।

प्रेस कमीशन ने जो इतनी बड़ी रिपोर्ट और इतनी शानदार रिपोर्ट दी है, उसमें उसने एक बात सामने ला कर रख दी है और वह यह है कि न सिर्फ सरकार देश में विचारों की आजादी को रोकती है, उसी से खतरा है आजादी को, नागरिक स्वाधीनता को, बल्कि समाचारपत्रों की दुनिया में भी कुछ ऐसी ताकतें पैदा हो गई हैं, जिनको अगर बढ़ने दिया जायगा, तो फिर इस देश में विचारों की स्वाधीनता या नागरिक स्वाधीनता नाम की कोई चीज नहीं रह जायगी। हमारे दोस्तों ने अभी बतलाया है कि किस तरह से सिर्फ पांच अखबारों के मालिक अट्ठाइस अखबारों को अपने हाथों में रखते हैं और उनके जरिये से वे पचास प्रतिशत से अधिक संकुलेशन को अपने मातहत रखते हैं। मैं आप से कहना चाहता हूँ कि यदि सरकार ने प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशों को बहुत जल्दी और मजबूती से काम में नहीं लाया, तो इस देश में वह समय बहुत जल्द आने वाला है जब कि बहुत थोड़े, मुट्ठी भर, अखबार यहां बच जायेंगे और वे भी मुट्ठी भर मालिकों के हाथ जायेंगे और तब इस देश में विचारों की स्वाधीनता नाम की कोई चीज नहीं रहेगी। वे तमाम अखबार, जिन्हें छोट छोट अखबार कहते हैं, जिन्हें स्वाधीन पत्र कहा जा सकता है, वे सभी मर जायेंगे, बल्कि उनमें से बहुत से तो मर चुके हैं, बहुत से मरने की खाट पर पड़े हुए हैं और अगर जल्द कोई कार्यवाही न की गई, तो वे खत्म हो जायेंगे। फिर इस देश में विचारों की स्वतंत्रता खत्म हो जायगी, देश को वही राय बनानी होगी, जो ये पांच बड़े बड़े मालिक बनायेंगे, देश को उन्हीं की राय पर चलना होगा और फिर क्या होगा, यह भगवान ही जानें।

आज सब लोग यह मांग कर रहे हैं कि देश में जो नयी स्वाधीनता हासिल हुई है, जो नया लोक-राज्य बन रहा है, जो नई डेमोक्रेसी बन रही

[श्री एम० पी० मिश्र]

हैं, उसको मजबूत करना चाहिए और इस लिए यह समा आवाज लगा रही हैं कि प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशों को, बिना उनमें कोई रद्द-बादल किए, सरकार बहुत जल्द काम में लाए।

एक बहुत तकलीफ की बात है। मैं समझता था कि जमाने की जो आवाज है, उसको इस देश के धनी लोग महसूस करेंगे; जो बात आसमान पर लिखी जा चुकी है, उसको वे लोग पढ़ेंगे। अच्छा होता कि जो अखबारों के बड़े बड़े मालिक हैं, वे इस बात को समझते कि जमाना किये जा रहा है और आज की आवाज क्या है। अच्छा होता कि वे सरकार के पास आते और बोलते कि प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशें बहुत उचित हैं, जरूरी हैं और हम उनका समर्थन करते हैं और हम सरकार का साथ देना चाहते हैं।

प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशों का सिर्फ एक मानी है, जिसे अंग्रेजी में कहते हैं "लिव एंड लेट लिव" यानी हम जियें और तुमको भी जीने दें। मैं कहता हूँ कि बड़े अखबार भी रहें। बड़े अखबारों को प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशों खत्म नहीं करतीं। वह रहेंगे। अगर प्रेस कमीशन की सारी सिफारिशों भी काम में आ जायें तो वे बड़े अखबार जिनको बड़े बड़े मालिक चला रहे हैं, जीते रहेंगे। ऐसा होगा कि बड़े अखबारों के साथ-साथ देश के छोट-छोट अखबार, जिनके रहने से देश में विचारों की स्वाधीनता कायम है, जिनके रहने से देश के लोग भिन्न भिन्न दृष्टिकोणों से परिचित होते हैं, भी रहेंगे। लेकिन मुझ को बहुत ताज्जुब होता है कि इस १९५५ के साल में भी इस देश के एंजीपीत, बड़े अखबारों के मालिक, इस चीज को बरदाश्त करने को तैयार नहीं हैं कि यह छोट-छोट स्वाधीन अखबार कायम रहें। ये लोग ऐसे अखबारों को भी बरदाश्त करने को तैयार नहीं हैं जो कि ५० बरस से इस देश की सेवा करते आ रहे हैं। और यही कारण है कि आज हम १५ दिनों से दिल्ली में बड़े अखबारों के मालिकों की तरफ से और उनके एजेंटों की तरफ से बहुत दौड़-धूप होती देख रहे हैं। सरकार के पास तरह-तरह से असर पहुंचाया

जा रहे हैं। यहां तक धमकी दी जाती है कि अगर तुम ने प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशों को मान लिया तो अगले चुनाव में हम कांग्रेस को मदद नहीं करेंगे। हम कहते हैं कि अगर इस देश में कांग्रेस या सरकार बड़े अखबार वालों की मदद से ही चुनाव में जीत सकती है तो हम उस मदद को लेने के लिये तैयार नहीं हैं। कांग्रेस को अगर जीतना है तो वह अपनी ताकत से और जनता के प्यार से जीतगी, न कि बड़े अखबारों के मालिकों की मदद से। और अगर कांग्रेस उन्हीं की मदद से जीतती है तो वह जीत ज्यादा दिन नहीं टिक सकती। हम कहते हैं कि यह बड़े दुःख की बात है कि इस १९५५ के साल में भी, जब कि आप जानते हैं कि इस लोक-सभा ने फौसला कर लिया है कि हमें इस देश के समाज को सांशलिस्ट ढांचे पर बनाना है, हमारे देश के एंजीपीत इस प्रकार की कांशिश कर रहे हैं। इस सांशलिस्ट ढांचे के मानी यही है कि छोट-छोट अखबार भी जियें। और ये छोट-छोट अखबार इसलिए जियें कि इस देश में लोक-राज्य प्रगीत कर सकें और प्रजातंत्र जी सकें।

अभी अभी हमारे दोस्तों ने कहा कि जापान में एक अखबार है जिसका सरकारुलेशन ४० लाख है। इंग्लैण्ड में ऐसे अखबार हैं जिनका सरकारुलेशन २० लाख से ज्यादा है। अगर दस बरस पहले इस समा में यह बातचीत होती तो हर हिन्दुस्तानी के मन में यह हौसला उठता कि हमारे देश में भी ऐसे अखबार होते जिनका सरकारुलेशन ४० या ५० लाख होता क्योंकि हम तो ४० करोड़ आदमी इस देश में रहते हैं। लेकिन मैं समझता हूँ कि हमारे देश को अब सब करना चाहिए और ऐसा हौसला नहीं करना चाहिए कि हमारे देश में भी ऐसे अखबार हों जिनका सरकारुलेशन ५० या ६० लाख हो। यह बुरी चीज है। और अगर इस देश में गरीबी की वजह से यह बुरी चीज, यह अखबारों का अभिशाप, नहीं आया है तो यह अच्छी चीज है। मैं चाहता हूँ कि वह दिन न आवे कि इस देश में किसी एक अखबार का सरकारुलेशन ५० लाख हो। उसके बजाय हम चाहेंगे कि इस देश में जो न्यूज एजेंसियां हैं

उनके टेलीप्रिंटों की लाइनें एक एक जिले तक जायें, एक एक जिले में अखबारों के इफ्तार हों। वहां वह खबर पहुंचाई जायें और हर छोटे से छोटे शहर और कस्बे से अखबार निकल सकें, स्थायी अखबार निकल सकें और उनका सरकारेशन २० या २५ हजार ही हो। अगर ऐसा हो तो ज्यादा अच्छा है। हम चाहेंगे कि इस तरह से हजारों अखबार निकलें और केवल दो चार अखबार, जिनका सरकारेशन ५० लाख या १ करोड़ हो, उनकी मुद्रती में दूश न रहे। मुझे इस बात से बड़ी तकलीफ होती है कि आज सन् १९५५ के साल में भी हमारे पूंजीपति अपने दिमाग को नहीं बदल सकें। वे १५ दिन से इस कोशिश में हैं कि सरकार उनका तो जीने दें लेकिन जो सिफारिशें प्रेस कमीशन ने छोटे अखबारों के लिए की हैं उनको वे नहीं चाहते कि लागू की जायें। वह दूसरों को नहीं जीने देना चाहते। उन्हीं का यह कहना है कि यह जो सिफारिश है कि पत्रकारों की कम-से-कम तनखाह आदि मुकररे कर दी जायें, इसके लागू करने से छोटे अखबार बन्द हो जायेंगे। मैं भी एक छोटे अखबार से सम्बन्ध रखता हूँ। मैं कहता हूँ कि अगर सरकार इस सिफारिश के बजाय ऐसा करे कि छोटे अखबारों को पत्रकारों की तनखाह आदि पर जो खर्चा होता है उसको दें दें और प्राइस-पेज शेंड्यूल की सिफारिश को लागू न करे तो भी छोटे अखबार जीते नहीं रह सकेंगे। तब भी वे मर जायेंगे। अभी यहां बतलाया गया है कि किसी अखबार में १० प्रतिशत सम्पादकीय विभाग पर खर्च होता है। अगर यह दस प्रतिशत खर्च भी सरकार दें दें और छोटे अखबारों को बचाने का कोई और उपाय न करे तो भी ये छोटे अखबार जीते नहीं रह सकते। उनको जिन्दा रखने की केवल एक ही सुरत है और वह यह कि अखबारों की कीमत पेजों के हिसाब से निर्दिष्ट कर दी जायें जिसको प्राइस-पेज शेंड्यूल कहते हैं। इसके बारे में भी बड़ा वावैला मचाया जाता है कि यह हिसाब बन ही नहीं सकता। सन् १९५२ तक, यानी लड़ाई के बाद तक, इसी हिसाब से दूश के अखबार निकलते रहे और इसी वजह से दूश के बड़े और छोटे अखबार जीवित रह

सकें। इस बीच में अखबारों पर यह नियंत्रण था। तो क्या वजह है कि अब इस नियंत्रण में अखबार नहीं चल सकेंगे। रिपोर्ट में बतलाया गया है कि एक पैसे में एक पेज दिया जायें और न्यूज प्रिंट का.....

डा० कैसकर : रिपोर्ट में तो ऐसा नहीं कहा गया है।

श्री एम० पी० मिश्र : इंडिकेशन है उसमें।

डा० कैसकर : वह तो नमूने के तौर पर दिया गया है।

श्री एम० पी० मिश्र : रिपोर्ट बिल्कुल तो दाम निर्दिष्ट नहीं कर सकती थी, क्योंकि न्यूज-प्रिंट का दाम घटता-बढ़ता रहता है। ऐसा नहीं हो सकता कि प्रेस कमीशन या सरकार सब दिन के लिए एक दाम निर्दिष्ट कर दें। मैं कहता हूँ कि जो नियम हम लड़ाई के जमाने में दाम आदि निर्दिष्ट करने के सम्बन्ध में बरतते थे उसको आज भी बरता जा सकता है। यह बहुत गलत चीज है जैसे कि बम्बई का फ्री जनरल आठ पेज के अखबार को चार पैसे में बांट दें। कमीशन ने बतलाया है कि चार पेज का अखबार निकालने में करीब करीब चार पैसे खर्च पड़ता है। यही नियम सब अखबारों पर लागू होना चाहिए।

आपने कमीशन की रिपोर्ट में पढ़ा ही होगा कि हिन्दुस्तान में अखबारों के उद्योग में सिर्फ ७ करोड़ रुपये लगा हुआ है। इसलिए अगर कोई आदमी १४ करोड़ रुपये लगाने को तैयार हो जायें तो वह सब अखबारों को बरबाद कर सकता है। अगर कोई इतना रुपया लगा दें तो वह दूश के सारे अखबारों को खत्म कर सकता है। इसलिए मैं कहता हूँ कि प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट किसी काम की न रहेगी अगर सरकार ने ईमानदारी से पेज-प्राइस शेंड्यूल लागू नहीं किया। इसके बारे में जो बड़े बड़े अखबार वावैला मचा रहे हैं उसको सरकार को नहीं सुनना चाहिए। और अगर सरकार सुनेगी तो सरकार इस दूश के इस नये लोक-संज्य के साथ बड़ा अन्याय करेगी।



[श्री एम० पी० मिश्र]

में ने कहा कि केवल दस प्रतिशत रूपया अखबार के सम्पादन विभाग पर खर्च होता है। प्रेस कमीशन ने अखबारों के पत्रकारों के लिए जो सिफारिश की है अगर उसे लागू कर दिया जाय तो मैं समझता हूँ कि छोटें अखबारों को शुरू में कुछ कौठनाई हो सकती है। लेकिन वह कौठनाई दूर हो जायगी अगर अखबारों के दाम पर नियंत्रण हो, और साथ ही साथ एक दूसरी सिफारिश पर भी अमल किया जाय, यानी विज्ञापनों के लिए भी एक कानून बनाया जाय। आप लोग जानते हैं कि आज बड़े बड़े अखबारों में 80 प्रतिशत स्थान में विज्ञापन ही छपते हैं और केवल 20 प्रतिशत स्थान समाचारों को दिया जाता है, उसमें भी समाचारों से विचार ज्यादा रहते हैं। प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिश है कि अखबार 80 प्रतिशत तक जगह विज्ञापनों के लिए दे सकते हैं और बाकी जगह उनको समाचारों के लिए देनी चाहिए। ऐसा हो तो जो विज्ञापन बचे रहेंगे वे छोटें अखबारों को मिल जायेंगे और उनके सहारे छोटें अखबार जी सकते हैं। कोई दूसरी सूरत उनके जीने की नहीं है।

एक बात और है। अभी कुछ दोस्तों ने चर्चा की है कि किस तरह से कुछ अखबार यह एलान करते हैं कि अगर तुम हमारा अखबार खरीद लो और उसको बाद में बचे दो तो तुम को दाम का दाम मिल जायगा। मुझ को यह देख कर तकलीफ होती है कि स्टैंडसमेंट जैसे अखबार कभी कभी हफ्ते में दो दो सप्लीमेंट इंजीनियरिंग सप्लीमेंट या कोई और सप्लीमेंट, निकाल देते हैं। जो व्यापारी हैं उन्होंने से वे लेख ले लेते हैं और उन्हीं से विज्ञापन ले लेते हैं। क्योंकि उनके पास पूंजी की कमी नहीं है, वे ये हरकतें करते हैं और सब विज्ञापन समेट लेते हैं और छोटें अखबारों को विज्ञापन नहीं मिल पाते हैं। इसलिए यह बात साँचनी होगी कि अगर इस दृश में लोकतंत्र को जमाना है, प्रजातंत्र को जमाना है तो हमें छोटें अखबारों को बचाना होगा।

आप जानते हैं कि इस दृश में लोग एक अखबार प्रति व्यक्ति भी खरीदने की स्थिति में

नहीं हैं और अधिकांश लोग तो कोई अखबार ही नहीं खरीदते। लोगों की अखबार पढ़ने की कुछ आदत नहीं बन पायी है आपको रेल में फ्लट क्लास के डिब्बे में बैठने वाले लोग मिलेंगे जो और दुनिया भर के तो सार खर्च करते हैं लेकिन एक अखबार अपने लिए नहीं खरीदेंगे और इस बात का इंतजार करेंगे कि कब उनकी बगल में बैठे हुए मुसाफिर अखबार या पत्रिका पढ़ कर सीट पर रखें और वह उसको भरपूर लें। तो आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि लोगों की अखबार खरीदने की आदत बननी चाहिये लेकिन जब तक कि हमारा दृश गरीब है और एक आदमी एक ही अखबार खरीद सकता है तब तक यह उरु ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए कि अखबारों की कीमत में कुछ समझ रखी जाय। क्योंकि आप स्वयं समझ सकते हैं कि जब पाठक को चार पैसे में आठ या दस पंज का अखबार मिलेगा तो वह चार पैसे में चार ही पंज का अखबार क्यों खरीदेंगे। इसलिए मैं माननीय डा० कंसकर साहब से कहना चाहता हूँ, वैसे मैं जानता हूँ कि उनकी राय क्या है, वह प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशों के साथ है, लेकिन जो और असर तरह तरह के पहुँचाये जाते हैं, उन असरात से उनको अपने को बचाना है। आज उनके सामने इस दृश में लोक-राज्य को मजबूत करने के लिये बहुत बड़ा मौका है और उसमें वह बहुत बड़ा योग दे सकते हैं और वह योग यह है कि वह प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशों को स्वीकार कर लें और उनको अमल में लायें ताकि छोटें अखबार बच सकें और दृश की आजादी बच सके।

**Shri Lokenath Mishra (Puri):** Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful to you that you have given me a chance to speak on this subject which is of vital importance for the future of our country. It is said that the Press is the Fourth State and as such in the present world it has great importance. We must take this opportunity to realise what are the mischiefs it can do and what are the benefits it can confer on this country.

This report of the Press Commission is a voluminous and illuminating one and has tried to put all the aspects of this question before us. We are extremely thankful that with an unbiassed mind they have tried to suggest as best as they could measures to improve this Fourth State of our country.

It appears strange to me that the Press which is one of the most vital instruments of public education and information should at all be in the hands of a few people, however great and good they might be; they do not certainly represent the whole nation.

My first objection and grievance is this and I say that from this very moment, the Government should see that this great instrument of public instruction and education should not be in the hands of a few people. Let there rather be no Press at all for a time if the nation cannot provide for its own Press and public education except through plutocratic entrepreneurs. To put public education in the hands of a few people because they have money is the most unkindest thing for us.

We know that anything that comes in print becomes gospel to us. And the moment something appears in the Press, our people, without the least hesitation, take it to be true. When that is the position of things, you know what the Press is capable of, if they want to favour somebody or to disfavour somebody, some institution or something like that.

In this connection, I will refer you to that portion of the report of the Press Commission in which they say about newspaper ownership, control and motivation. They say:

"Interference with professional standards is most objectionable when it arises from the financial and economic interests of the proprietor. The safeguard in such matters would be for the paper to publish periodically a complete statement of the names of proprietors and the responsible executive of the newspaper so that

the public would judge for themselves the extent to which the views expressed in the paper may have to be rejected as being possibly biased."

My friend, Dr. Sinha just now said—I did not know all that—that the entire Press of the country is in the hands of 7 or 8 people. In fact if the people were to know that the entire Press, the UPI or the PTI is in the hands of a few capitalists who may do as they like in the interests of their own finances, most enlightened people generally would have taken the Press with a grain of salt.

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** A pinch of salt.

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** But the fact remains that people do not know anything like that. They are given the news, they have to take it as it is and as true. Therefore, the first thing we should do is this. We should, first of all, break up this PTI or the UPI, which are in the hands of a very few people, which are responsible for catering news to us. In order to avoid all this misfortune, what have the Press Commission suggested? They have suggested that there should be a diffusion of ownership. People might think—and even the report thinks—that it is not a practical proposition. In other words, this country cannot manage to have that amount of capital collectively to finance the Press. I do not think that it is such an impractical proposition, if you can by legislation put standards as to what sort of journalism we should have in this country, of what size too. I think we can easily do it. To my mind, Gandhi's *Harijan* was an ideal journal. When I read it I knew what it was worth. But, at the same time, I knew that it did not always pay its way. How sad!

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** It was a views paper and not a newspaper.

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** None the less it was a journal. My point is this. Whether it is a views paper or a newspaper, certain standards should

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be put before us. We should not always cater to the base tastes of our people. We should not have a paper in order simply to be popular and the paper be purchased by many people. When Gandhiji was there, he put a sound standard. I never suggest that there will be more and more Gandhis who could put their standards and have other "Young Indias". But, you can certainly say that papers must have so many pages such kind of stuff and no embellishments. I say we get our dailies, 8 pages, 12 pages or even 20 pages. Who cares to read all of them? In fact, no serious man has any time to go through all those things. Nobody would like to have such long and big papers. Therefore, in the interest of economy, in the interests of the effective use of journals, dailies, weeklies and even monthlies, we should set up a standard that we must have news about one or two pages. I do not think that all the world over there is so much of news that we cannot cover it in one or two pages every day. Let us give up those headlines, give up those advertisements, which make small matters bulky. Then, we can arrange to have all the news of the world every day within a small size or area. We may have some comments or interpretations on that. If you regulate and canalise and give a proper size, then I do not think there is any difficulty for any newspaperman not to be able to finance it. We can as well say that every language daily should have only 4 pages and should be priced only 4 pice, that there should be no language daily in India—to whatever State it might belong—which will have more than 4 pages and whose price is more than one anna.

This we can easily do and there is nothing difficult about it.

**Dr. Keskar:** Who has said that?

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** That is what I say. One friend has just now said that in this technological age, we must have so many photographs, brilliant flashes, and therefore, we

must have so many machineries. But I can say one thing that if you want to correct the Press, if you want to educate the people properly and correctly, you should give up this habit of having photographs and advertising people's faces and indulging in colourfulness.

**An Hon. Member:** Members of Parliament may be exempted.

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** The tendency is growing in our country that we are caring for persons. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Home Minister and such persons are great names and it is now a great danger to democracy that instead of thinking freely and objectively and dispassionately, we have now begun to think in terms of persons: so and so has said so and it must be all right. Therefore, if you want to educate the people, please publish such statements anonymously. Let the people judge things and ideas by themselves and not by persons.

**Shri S. S. More:** Does he mean to suggest that our speeches should be published without our names?

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** Let my friend, Shri More, have his name published, but not his picture.

**Shri S. S. More:** I do not do it because I have no paper of my own (Interruption).

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** Let me not be disturbed. Even for Members of Parliament, my idea is that at the time of elections or such political purposes, their names must be there because otherwise they have no chance of letting the people know their individual doings. For that purpose, let Shri More's name be published, but not his photograph. What is important for the people is to know that he is alive in Parliament and is doing something for the people, and not how beautiful he is looking. Therefore, my point is that there must be a ban on photographs.

**Shri S. S. More:** This is news to me that I look beautiful.

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** If I am wrong, let me withdraw it. To start with, we can put such restraints on our eyes so that we are not attracted by the glamour of the printing of the news but by the objective factuality of the news, and that will be proper education.

**An Hon. Member:** Lesson of *brahmacharya*.

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** My friend says that that is a lesson of *brahmacharya*, as if the lessons of *brahmacharya* are bad. It might be that due to human frailty we cannot have *brahmacharya*. But who can say that *brahmacharya* is bad?

**Dr. Suresh Chandra (Aurangabad):** But what relation has that to the Press Commission Report? There is some irrelevancy in bringing this here.

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** But it is not for him to say what is relevant or irrelevant. The Chair is there and he need not arrogate to himself the powers of the Chair. And it is he who brought in '*Brahmacharya*' and not I.

I very earnestly say that India is a poor country and everyone cannot purchase a newspaper costing two or three annas. Therefore, we must make the papers to function in such a manner that both the management and the people can take full benefit out of them. This is not my novel idea. My friend perhaps thinks that this is my novel idea, but this idea is also given in the Press Commission Report itself. Kindly refer to page 61 of the summarised book by Parliament on the Press Commission Report and it says under the heading 'Government and the Press':

"There is, however, an excessive tendency to consider the Press as a means of publicity for certain activities of the State or for certain individuals, and insufficient importance is attached to the functioning of the Press as a reporter and interpreter for the people."

Then again it says:

"A scrutiny of the collections of photographs, Press releases and Government periodicals shows a tendency to ignore the fundamental achievements or objectives and to spot-light the dignitaries to emphasise the persons and not what they have done. The Information Directorates and the Government publications should eschew such a stultifying tendency."

In fact, the Press Commission has got the crux of the point that instead of becoming a reporting or educating instrument for the State, the Press at the present time becomes the advertiser of dignitaries or persons and can make and unmake persons big or small. Therefore, my first suggestion is that the hon. Minister should take care to formulate some "Nots" or "Don'ts"—Some "Don'ts" must be observed by the Press and that must be through legislation.

Then, the second point is this. I come to the editor's status and independence. The Press Commission Report says that in the days previous to Independence, the Press had certain ethics and standards and was working with a missionary zeal, but has now fallen from grace. I do not think it is so true as stated there, but there is some truth in it. Why has it happened? My idea is that when we were not free, there was only one enemy before us, the foreign government.

**Acharya Kripalani:** Now we have two enemies: the Government and the Press lords.

**Shri Lokenath Mishra:** There was no man in the country then to say that that was a wrong cause; there was at least one point on which the whole country was unanimous. Therefore, the Press was bound to uphold that point. When that is gone, now we find not one enemy, but everyone is the enemy of the other. Therefore, the whole outlook has changed and the missionary spirit is now being used against ourselves. I would,

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therefore, suggest that before we expect the Press to tone themselves up, we as public men, we as the Government and we as people who are responsible to the public, should do something to tone up ourselves, and by that, I hope, the rest will be done.

Look at the editors. If the proprietor is a dunce if he does not know how to read and write but has enough money and, therefore, can procure the services of some people to write an editorial, we cannot have a grievance against that man, because he pays for it, and if he pays the piper, he must have the tune. We want someone to pay the piper and we shall dictate the tune; that cannot be done. If you want independent editorials, we must set the things in such a manner that we can have editors who will be independent in their own. To say that editors must be independent is, to some extent, vague. After all the editor is an individual; he has his own likes and dislikes and his environment. We have an idea that when the editor writes something he represents the whole people. Indeed, what is found in the editorial is in no sense representative. It comes from as good an individual as any one of us who is not an editor but our mind has been so trained that we take the editorial as representative public opinion. This is wrong.

I can talk of language papers in my own State of Orissa. There are only two or three good language newspapers. I know that they cannot pay their way. Sometimes we find that the editor is such and such man but he does not write. He lends his name or sometimes signs the editorial which is written by somebody else. We must get out of this absurd position.

Then comes the question of having trusts. They cannot be trusted because we know there are public trusts which are running newspapers but they have become individual domestic properties and are run as they

like, sometimes quite out of proportion against public good. Supposing one Minister goes there and gives a lecture, you see that there are three columns out of eight columns for that. You must see that no speech from whatever great man it might be will occupy more than a column. We should put a restriction like that for the time being. Unless we do that we will have neither the time for us nor the space for good news and the poor reader will simply be neither here nor there.

Mr. Chairman: His time is up.

Shri Lokenath Mishra: Thank you for giving me this chance. I have said a few of the things I felt. If they have been irrelevant as my friend has said...

Dr. Suresh Chandra: I withdraw.

Shri Lokenath Mishra: Therefore, I thank you, dear friend.

Shri Sarangadhar Das (Dhenkanal—West Cuttack): Much has been said about the Press in India. I feel very sorry to mention this that the Press in India has since the pre-Independence days changed to almost an evil because its production is in the hands of people who make a sweet shop of the working journalists. They are not paid living wages. Sometimes they are employed verbally and after two or three months they are thrown out and no payment is made. Under such conditions the news that is given to us in the papers cannot be upto the mark. This is the way they work: they work several hours during the day and then again are sent away for gathering news or covering some events at night; thus they work longer hours than necessary and so it is natural that things are not actually what they should be.

Then again, the papers all over India—almost every newspaper sings tunes in praise of the Ministers—Ministers at the Centre as well as in the States. Whenever a Minister goes somewhere, opens a school or some

cinema or something like that and delivers a speech on a subject which he does not know, and on which he is not a specialist because it is an oration delivered by a Minister, columns and columns are given to that in the Press. That is the reason I say that the Press in India is becoming an evil; there is another reason. In other countries capitalists, businessmen, manufacturers and merchants do not own any newspapers. I admit there are other people who own papers and who work in the interest of certain businessman or certain business interests. But here in India we have a spectacle of big businessmen owning a string of newspapers. The papers are full of what they say and how their particular interest would be preserved.

I have here before me copies of a very well known English daily in which the proprietor's speech in Bombay was published on one day—about a column. This proprietor objected that the newspaper's special correspondent's despatch was not published. The first publication was of the PTI. So, the next day, the special correspondent's despatch was published though the subject was the same. Even that was not perhaps satisfactory. So, on the third day a fuller report of the same event was published. Now, when a daily paper publishes for three consecutive days the report of the speech of a certain individual—may be the proprietor or anybody else—other important news has to be sacrificed or blacked out in order to make space for the speech of this gentleman.

There are certain other matters also in the Press. For instance one paper takes the news from distant places. Some Englishmen write to some papers in England and there is an arrangement with these papers and the despatch is published here. You will be surprised to learn that in the Bandung Conference almost all the Indian papers had their own staff representatives but this particular paper relied on despatches sent by two Englishmen to two papers in England—

one a daily and the other a weekly. They call this the Fourth Estate and they call themselves patriotic. Could anyone call them patriotic when instead of employing their own nationals and relying on news that these nationals give—the news that they give would be from the patriotic point of view and not from the point of view of some foreigners—they adopt such practices? How can the Press barons who are owning the Press be called patriotic? The recent Goa firings, and so on, are also covered by foreign nationals who send their despatches to England and send a copy over here. I feel that this condition should not be allowed to continue any longer. The Press should be so regularised that the monopolies must be broken. There are chains of papers, with English or Indian language dailies, weeklies or both, spreading the same kind of ideas which suit the convenience of the proprietor. If that chain of papers is absolutely pro-Government and portrays only the Ministers' doings then with a circulation of several thousands or a lakh it spreads the same idea through English or through the Indian language. If the chain of papers is broken up and one proprietor has only one paper then there is likely to be different ideas spreading in the country and thus educating the people as they should be getting different points of view instead of only one point of view.

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One friend had used some harsh words against these Press barons. I do not want to use harsh words but, I believe that what he had said is correct when we compare the present day Press with the Press of the pre-Independence days.

Sir, I urge upon the Minister to implement all the recommendations of the Press Commission without any further delay. Just this morning I have received a representation from the south of India in which it is said that pressure is being brought upon the Government to fix different minimum wages for different regions. It

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is said that one plea for doing so is that the cost of living indices in different regions of the country are different, and therefore the minimum salary for the working journalists should be different in different parts of the country. It is also said that in Delhi certain newspapers pay a dearness allowance of 45 per cent—I do not know whether that is correct or not, but this representation says so—while in the south there are many newspapers which do not pay any dearness allowance because the cost of living index in the south is much lower than that in the north. But, that is not an argument because the people in the south are doing the same kind of work as they are doing in the north. There should, therefore, be no distinction as there is no distinction in the work of the people whether in the north or the south. I hope it is not true that there is any pressure from the interested parties brought upon the Government; but, if there is any, then I urge upon the Minister not to yield to such pressure but to implement the recommendations of the Press Commission in full.

Then I have one more point and that is about the Press agencies. There are two national news agencies. I have noted—not only now, but even before our Independence—that the agencies do not cover news as they should do. Covering news means spending money. Sending out staff correspondents to go in tram-cars or buses will take a good deal of time to get to the destination. That is not the way to gather news in the present age. There should be staff cars at the disposal of the Press correspondents to go somewhere and gather news.

I, particularly, wish to mention one calamity that has taken hold of Orissa. Last year's drought is being followed by this year's drought. People in the affected districts are in a very bad condition. But, I have not noticed any news brought forward by the P.T.I. or the U.P.I. about this calamity in Orissa.

**An Hon. Member:** The papers are full of floods.

**Shri Sarangadhar Das:** Yes, they are too full of floods. But, besides floods there are other calamities also that make news. What I mean to say is that unlike in other countries where news agencies send out staff correspondents and spend money to gather news from the spot, our agencies rely on other people who give news without any expense to agencies. For instance, I have given news to the papers—which have been published, of course—but, it is the duty of the news agency to find out whether I have told the truth or not. They do not do it. That money goes into the pockets of those who own the agencies and is not spent for gathering news and giving real news to the readers of newspapers.

Then again, there are times when there is pressure from Government on the news agencies depending on the subsidies that they are getting to suppress certain things. I remember, some three years ago, there was a case in Lucknow. The Praja Socialist Party held a big demonstration against the collection of "ten times the rent" and some responsible papers reported that, there were over a lakh of people in that procession. One daily newspaper here,—I do not know how it happened and perhaps pressure might have been brought on the paper—blacked out the news. It was absolutely blacked out and one piece of news that appeared at that time in that paper was a quarrel between the Socialists and the Communists in that procession.

**An Hon. Member:** Not the Congressmen?

**Shri Sarangadhar Das:** One of the staff correspondents of a responsible paper described the procession saying that it showed the shape of things to come. He had mentioned like that. But this news was blacked out in that particular paper that I mentioned earlier. It only described some quarrel between the communists and the socialists in that procession. When

I say these things I know the Government is likely to say, how can we prevent these things. But I feel that ways must be found by legislation as well as big executive action by which these things can be rectified because the Press is there to educate the people and unless that education is complete and objective, there is no benefit to be derived by us from the Press.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to participate in this important debate at this stage. At the outset, I would like to add my humble tribute to our late Chairman, Justice Rajadhyaksha, but for whose unremitting labour, great industry, unquestionable integrity and transparent sincerity as well as the capacity to go into every detail with enormous patience, hearing all sides and balance things, this report would not have been possible. I hope all sides of the House, whether they may or may not agree—even those who do not agree with the Commission's recommendations—will join with me in paying this tribute to that great man who is no more.

[SHRIMATI RENU CHAKRAVARTY in  
the Chair.]

It has often pained me that interested persons, because of their rupees, annas and pies that they make out of this noble trade, have tried to malign the impartiality and the integrity of that Chairman in their pronouncements and declarations and statements and resolutions. That aspect has pained me most. The Chairman is not here to reply to those charges of biased judgment, partiality and of not applying his mind judicially. Unfortunately he is not here, but it is my duty to say that though I have sat on many committees in my association with parliamentary life all these years, I have seldom found a Chairman who has applied himself impartially and conscientiously to any problem that came before the committee, as Justice Rajadhyaksha. I say that whenever any topic came up, all the aspects of that topic were well balanced, very fully discussed and the Chairman heard all sides. Rather he

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was very critical to some of those who had any views, pronounced views, from the very beginning, among the members of the Commission. He was the one man who forced us and saw to it that we followed our duty impartially whatever may be our previous convictions about anything, and saw that we balanced things properly, assessing their values correctly and coming to the right decision. Therefore, I would at the outset, appeal to the House and to all those concerned to consider this report dispassionately and also try to see why, though they may not like certain things, this Commission came to such conclusions as it did.

Since some mud-slinging has been done, it is my painful duty also to say a few harsh things about our Press. I love the Press; I have been born in the Press; I have worked for 21 years, the best part of my life, as a journalist. Beginning as an ordinary proof-reader, hardly getting Rs. 20 to Rs. 30, I worked in all capacities. I have got a love for that profession, and I feel for it. I say that whenever I meet anybody connected with the Press, I feel that I have met somebody who is in my own family. So it is certainly painful for me to say a few harsh things about the Press today. As evidence after evidence unfolded itself before us, I found that the ideal of my life was slowly toppling down. What has happened? What blight has beset this great profession in the few years after the war and during the war? There was a time when we lived for some ideals and worked for some of the ideals. Money was not the main consideration. Profit was not the sole consideration. The same papers who today are fighting for every pie of their profit—it is they who are supported by public subscriptions. I dare say that. One of our friends was saying what happened to those struggling papers who could not finance themselves or what was the condition of those papers who are today big papers. I have also seen the tragedy of it. Good papers, with nice traditions, started by great



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men who lived an ideal life and who were patriots, have gone down. Where is Kesari today? What has happened to the Leader?

**Shri V. G. Deshpande (Guna):** Kesari is there. It is being persecuted. Advertisements are not given to it by the Government of India.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** I am only trying to give the position that newspapers had. It is not a question as to what was happening. I am saying that the Press Commission stood for the freedom of expression and it has vindicated that right. Leave aside that aspect of the matter. Let us consider the question dispassionately. What is the position of those papers? They are nowhere. They are gone. What is the position of *Searchlight*? In whose pockets have these papers which were built up by the sweat and blood of our great patriotic journalists, gone? Where are they? They are now a part of the chain—if they exist at all. There are other papers like *New India*. What has happened to it? There was also a paper with which I myself was associated. What is its position today? What competition has it met from these people, these Press barons, of today? The greatest shock that we have got—because we have been associated with most of the papers in our days of political struggle—is the slow concentration of newspaper ownership and newspaper readership in a few hands. It is there. Nobody can deny that. These are the facts supplied by the affected people themselves, the newspaper proprietors themselves. It is they who have supplied us with these facts. If they have supplied wrong facts, they are to blame. But I know these facts were prepared, checked and counter-checked and we did our best to check them also and they are mostly correct except in the case of those newspapers which wanted to inflate their circulation figures, firstly, for advertisement purposes and secondly to get more newsprint during the control of newsprint in order to

black-market on newsprint. So, in order to keep up the previous figure which they have been giving in their various statements to the Government, they had to give some wrong figures. There is a case where the proprietor of a big newspaper in Calcutta having a circulation more than half a lakh has been carrying on newsprint transactions and all other kinds of transactions. We have not brought that all out in the report, but I am compelled to say all this here....

**Acharya Kripalani:** Very bad.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** Now, there is the demand to publish the entire evidence as early as possible....

**Several Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** But I ask, what is the use of throwing mud at a man who is no longer here in this world to defend himself?

**Acharya Kripalani:** Your Government will never publish it.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** I will start by saying something about the PTI and I hope, Madam Chairman, you will show me some indulgence in this regard. I am taking PTI first, because we the Members of Parliament have been circulated with all kinds of pamphlets from that side. The present Chairman of that concern—the Press Trust of India—has issued a small pamphlet called *Caveat (Interruptions)* I am not an Englishman and my pronunciation may not be quite correct: but it is spelt as *caveat*.

**Shri S. S. More (Sholapur):** That is a French word.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** In that he says that he was not called again. Unfortunately, the Chairman is no more here to say that he never told him that he would call him again. I was a member of that Commission, but there is nothing on record to show that we made any promise to call him at the end. He himself said, I want to be called again. There are all kinds of witnesses and why should

we show any great favour to one of the persons to be called over and over again as counsellor and adviser? If that was what he claimed to be, he was very much mistaken. He has made a grievance out of it; that is the pity. He says that the misdeeds to which the Commission refers are those which relate to the transitional period and when the new set-up had not come into vogue and that the old manager had done all kinds of things. But that is not so. When we refer to the large amounts owed by the directors to the PTI, we refer to the period after transition; when we refer to the various editions they are publishing in Simla, Delhi and Kanpur, without paying for them, we refer to the period after that. When we refer also to cases of suppression of news, we refer to the period after that—even as late as the time when this report was published. What happened to it? Our recommendations regarding the PTI, especially regarding the conditions of the working journalists, as you can see, have been mostly omitted from publication. There was the case of an ex-Chairman who is a present director. He issued—I am telling you about the impartiality of these people—instructions that the speeches of particular persons should not be published without his permission. Those were the instructions issued by him and he has admitted it before us. This is the proprietorial control over the freedom of the Press. Unfortunately, with due deference to Members on this side, I must say that few people have been agitating over the encroachment of capital upon the freedom of the Press. They have been worried too much about our existing law and all that; but I say that this concentration of the medium of expression, the freedom of expression, in a few hands is the most serious danger that can ever occur to any country and it is high time that we put an end to this.

One of the directors has been getting A services of the PTI and he has been paying for B services. Another director of the same concern—this is after the dismissal of the previous

manager and after the transition to which the managing editor of the *Hindustan Times* has referred in the pamphlets distributed so freely to all of us—was getting A services and paying for C services. When this question was put to that director, he was very rude to the Commission and that great gentleman, the Chairman of the Commission, who throughout our enquiry never said any strong word to any person, was compelled to ask that man to withdraw. Yet, not a word of regret came from the Board of Directors of the PTI. This is the attitude which the proprietors of the newspapers and news agencies showed to this Commission all along. There were cases where we had actually to resort to the power given to the Commission to summon a person to appear before it. There were cases where they did not appear repeatedly and warrants might have had to be issued; but the Chairman did not issue the warrants. He was so nice and so generous to everybody. That is why I am saying that the Commission's whole work was carried on with great impartiality and with great consideration to all sides and then only these decisions were taken.

I would like this House to consider the whole report in the context of what has been said previously in the report itself. It is admitted that there is the risk of concentration of ownership of the great medium of expression in this country. What is our duty? If democracy is to be nurtured and is to grow, it is our duty to see that the fourth estate is allowed to function properly and in the freest manner possible. The Press is not only free, it is independent. But today, whatever freedom the law may give, it cannot be independent if half a dozen people control more than 50 per cent of the circulation. That is the position today. Also, if papers published in our own mother-tongues have no scope to live and grow, it is a serious matter. It is all right if papers printed in foreign language do not flourish. But look at the prospect if in the course of the next ten years,

[Shri T. N. Singh]

We are not able to have papers in our own mother-tongues prospering in our country and circulating in large numbers giving all the necessary education and information to our people. That is very important. It is in this context, again, that I ask the House and the Government to consider the recommendations in this report.

It is also a fact that there is commercialism today in the press. I am grateful to Acharya Kripalani, who, in his very opening speech drew the attention of the House to commercialisation of the press. With big rotaries coming in, with new methods of production, and large circulation, and with huge investments involved, this has been happening. If it is craze for circulation at all costs, that is a very serious thing.

I shall now refer to the report itself, which says how circulation is being built up. This is what one of the biggest papers, to which I am referring to, says, addressing its correspondents about their code of conduct:

"Whenever you send a feature to us, please be particular about the fact that our readers do desire glimpses of the flesh and youth."

This is the morality of the proprietors of some of the biggest newspapers.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

An Hon. Member: Who is that?

Shri T. N. Singh: I can tell you the name; but I would much rather be guided by the wisdom of our late Chairman who thought in his discretion not to disclose his name. Since I have asked the Government to publish the evidence, which I hope they will do, all these facts will come before you. They are not going to be hidden for long.

Shri Kamath: The Minister is shaking his head, or is he nodding?

Shri T. N. Singh: There are several cases of suppression of news by the P.T.I.

What is the position of the employees? In a news agency, the greatest asset is its correspondents and reporters, namely, the employees generally. I can tell you that in the course of the enquiry I found the employees of the P.T.I. the most discontented lot. It was because of the bad payment. Imagine a correspondent in Delhi, being asked to run 8 miles or 10 miles to a place and report, getting Rs. 250 a month. That was supposed to be a cadre of the Press Trust of India. That was also scrapped as a measure of economy. But, what about the other heavy expenses that are being incurred at the same time? I may tell you that it was a sad thing to learn this. I at least lost faith in the management of the P.T.I. because I found that one of the previous managing directors, in his own paper was drawing a salary of Rs. 3,000, but his editor, the *de facto* man who does the job was getting Rs. 250/-. That is the ratio. That is his attitude to the employees under him. No wonder we found great opposition from him to any rise in pay.

Shri M. D. Joshi (Ratnagiri South): In what year was it?

Shri T. N. Singh: In the year in which we were enquiring. It was a sad thing. It was said, I get, because I am such a big man, I have great journalistic talent, that man has no justification to get more than that. With that bent, how do you expect any justice to be done to the employees of the P.T.I.? What is the position in the concern of another Chairman? In Delhi, there are sub-editors in that paper who are not getting more than Rs. 150, though they have been working as sub-editors for more than 6 years. Can you expect any fair deal from persons in charge of this great organisation to the employees? For that reason we have recommended that it should be formed into a public trust, another type of organisation. Why should we do it today? It is a national agency. We want it to gain that stature. The Royal Press Commission in England

recommended that all papers should try to become trusts. That is one of their recommendations. They have also noticed the tendency to convert big newspapers into trusts in England. Look at those people. That is real love of freedom of expression. Here, there is so much hue and cry: why should it be converted into anything like a trust. They do not want it. I know, they say it is not a profit-making concern. Yet, they object to it. Something strange: I cannot understand, why there should be this objection. For that reason I strongly urge on the Government to implement this recommendation soon. Otherwise, if this great national agency, with its best traditions is allowed to deteriorate, . . .

**An Hon. Member:** What tradition?

**Shri T. N. Singh:** It has a tradition. It has done useful work. I am not going to deny that. After all, when there was no news agency, they did some work. It is associated with the name of Shri K. C. Roy and others. Whatever it is, after all, it is an Indian enterprise, began initially as an Indian enterprise and I wish it all well. Therefore, I want the Government to implement our recommendations in this regard forthwith. If steps are not taken,—the teleprinters are in a bad way, there is no proper maintenance, the staff is dissatisfied, the situation will be further aggravated. Unless something is done, there will be great loss to us, so far as freedom of expression is concerned.

There is another news agency. I also have great affection for the U.P.I. because, in the old days when we suffered, this agency also suffered. I wish it all well. We have tried to make proper recommendations so that this concern may develop. But, I have recently been shocked to know from first hand that this concern has been fully mortgaged to a businessman, who wants to become a bigger press baron than any one dreamt of, because he owns another paper also. That gentleman holds entire mortgage

over it, so to say. That is a very dangerous position. I advised this agency to go to the Government,—it was in difficulties—straightaway and say we are prepared to accept all the recommendations of the Press Commission, please rescue us. Unfortunately, this has not been done. I am sorry for that. A charge is there. I will be unfair to this agency, for which I have regard and affection, if I do not say this. The charge is that of provincialism. I hope something will be done to rectify that matter. More than that, I do not want to say about the agencies because they have taken a lot of my time. I shall now come to the question of the price-page schedule because I do not think I have got much time, but if necessary, if I get more time, I will go over other matters.

About the price-page schedule I have not seen much controversy in this House. There is general support. Yet, outside, if you go in the lobbies, or if you happen to go to tea with a newspaper proprietor or to somebody of his like, you will find the atmosphere very hot. Why? Having come to the conclusion that there is danger of concentration of ownership, having come to the conclusion that even after eight years of independence the newspapers in our mother tongue are not prospering, are going down, having seen the heavy casualties in some of the most respected and old papers, we set our mind as to what should be done. Moreover, remember that in these days when it is very difficult to start a newspaper if some people get entrenched today it will be impossible to unseat them and dislodge them. Therefore, it is imperative that steps should be taken here and now so that the precious thing that we all hold so dear, namely the freedom and independence of the press is assured. For that reason we applied our mind, and there were suggestions. As a matter of fact the suggestion also came from a very big newspaper about the price-page schedule. Also, the language papers were almost unanimous in their demand. Others

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who did not understand the implications tried to sit on the fence expressing doubts, hesitation, this and that. But even those persons who are vociferous today did not oppose it strongly before us, or for that matter they had no opinion on it. They were doubtful about it. They did not know what to say or what to think. So, that was the position. In that context this proposal was brought before us. We considered, and what was the position. We said: "Let us see if there is any instance of such kind of regulation elsewhere." What to say of elsewhere, we had an instance in this country itself. During the whole of the war period and even after that there was a price-page schedule. Of course, that was on a basis different from what we have recommended, but there was one. And then we noticed the result. What happened? What were the effects of price-page schedule? The effects were that one and all papers prospered. Even the papers which are today so vociferous and clamorous against the price-page schedule all prospered. It suited them all right, because then it was a question of their own existence, but now their existence is assured and they do not want others to exist. That is the position. If they were the toad under the harrow themselves, they would have talked in another language. Look at the plight of language papers. They are paying their people miserable salaries. They are not able to meet their expenses. The cost of newsprint is very high. Most of the language papers have to purchase sheets, not reams which are cheaper. And yet they have to compete with a superior organisation, well-established papers. They have to replace these foreign language papers. That is the task we have set them, and yet we do not want to help them. We do not want to show any consideration to these people.

The cost has all been worked out. I wish that any of the so-called experts of the newspaper proprietorial caste and class had tried to rebut the

costings that have been made, had tried to say anything about the actual technical aspect of the problem. Many of us were not technicians. I was also out of touch with the current trend of prices regarding newsprint etc., in those days and I had to somehow get at facts, but I have not heard anything about that. If it is a fact that there is a certain stated cost for a particular page of a paper or a particular number of pages of a paper, I want to know how far it is justified that that paper, that commodity, should be sold at half the cost of production. And why? In order that no competitor may remain. And what is the history of such competitions? Once they have completely eliminated the others, they raise their prices. Do we not know of petroleum and so many other monopolies that have been developed and the concentrations of ownership that have been developed? The result will be that in the ultimate analysis the reader in whose name so much is being said, for whom the proprietors have developed so much love all of a sudden—they have developed great affection, great regard, very tender regard for the reader—will suffer. But I assure you that our reader is so zealous and so sincere about the concept of freedom of the press that he would much rather pay half a pie or a pie more than allow the concentration of newspapers in a few hands, in the hands of half a dozen people. He will fight this I am sure, it has only to be explained. Is he not doing it in regard to commodities? Are we not leaving all kinds of excise duties and sales tax, is he not paying it so that our economy may develop? Then, why will he not do this small thing? And whom does it appeal to? When I sit in the lobbies at times I find people who can very well afford to pay even up to eight annas or six annas become great exponents of the cause of the readers and say you must go on supplying a cheaper paper. All right, I will supply it, and what will be the result? The independent small newspaper will go and as a result of this cir-

ulation war that is going on today, one or other of the newspapers will go. So, instead of half a dozen, there will remain only four owners in whom will be concentrated more than 50 or 60 per cent. of the circulation. That will be the position. Do we want that? Does the Government want that? Or, does the House really want that? If it wants it, I have nothing to say, but I am confident that nobody wants it here, and therefore I wish that the recommendations of the Press Commission are fully implemented.

There is another reason. I was myself wondering as to why there is this strong opposition to the price-page schedule. Because, after reading the reactions of some of the big proprietors I had felt that they were going to sabotage the entire Press Commission report. But they only passed pious resolutions just expressing their fears. The I.E.N.S. says: "It is all right. We are willing to accept them, but the language newspapers will die." All of a sudden there is that regard, but in any case there is not so much opposition to those things like the recommendation on cross-word puzzles which will really kill many papers more than the price-page schedule. That is also true, but all those things they accept and they oppose this. I was myself wondering what is the matter, many of them are accepting these things, and then I said: "Because if the price-page schedule is defeated, then the worker and the journalist will not get the salary which they want. The papers will not have the finance. So, the best way to sabotage all the recommendations of the Press Commission report is to sabotage the price-page schedule recommendation." That is the motive. Otherwise, they did not object when the alien Government, a foreign Government continued imposition of price-page schedule after the war even. That was going on.

**Shri S. S. More:** There was not so easy approach to the Government to secure their objective.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** That may be. That is only a tribute to our Government which is approachable to every body.

**Shri S. S. More:** That is why it is a democratic Government.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** So I say that if we really want that all the recommendations of the Press Commission—leave aside the price-page schedule for the time being—should be implemented and if the House is really serious about it, then I would most humbly request the House...

**Acharya Kripalani:** The Minister has gone away.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** The Labour Minister is there and I am confident that all I am saying will be conveyed to the Minister of Information and Broadcasting.

**Acharya Kripalani:** He is a post office.

**The Minister of Labour (Shri Khandubhai Desai):** Yes.

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** Our Labour Minister has come to take charge of the working journalists.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** So, the price-page schedule, on which hinges the implementation of so many other recommendations regarding the conditions of our working journalists, must be enforced. Without that, you cannot improve the conditions of the journalists, and there can be no independence of the journalists, there can be no content among journalists, and there can be no development and progress of newspapers, which are the fourth estate of this country.

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** What about newsprint?

**Shri T. N. Singh:** My hon. friend here reminds me of newsprint. I shall now come to some of the other recommendations which we have made about newsprint. We find that slowly some newspaper proprietors have started developing into newspaper

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merchants also. That was what we discovered. I think the case of *Bombay Chronicle* is well-known. Many people must be knowing how it passed into the hands of Camas. This is how that development has been growing apace. Now, in these days of newsprint shortage, and higher prices or fluctuating prices, those who are actually doing this trade have got a great advantage. But why should they have advantage?

In the old days, licences were given to particular persons. By fortuitous circumstances, there was a change in the licensing system of newsprint, and thus they developed into newspaper merchants. That is how it came about. The history of this is traced back to the system of licensing. When we changed the system, they became newsprint merchants. And with that advantage, they have been trying to oust other papers, and to kill other papers. And since newsprint seems to be responsible for more than 50 per cent. of the cost of many newspapers, we thought, why not try to see that they all get it on equitable terms. The only thing that we could think of—and I think there can be no objection to that—was the setting up of a State trading organisation. That, I think, should meet this difficulty.

We have also suggested ways and means for cheaper news service to the district papers where development should take place. With that, the smaller language papers will be able to meet their reforms etc.

Lastly, I would like to say a few words about the Press Council. I think that it is essential that there should be a press council. Without that, this profession of journalism is in great danger of going astray, or of wrong persons coming into it and the proper standards not being maintained. It is for that reason that we thought of this. And now there is great hue and cry about the Chief Justice of India coming and nominating the personnel of this council. I fail

to understand where are those gentlemen of the press, who during the course of the enquiry had such a pathetic faith in the judiciary that, while saying, yes, elections will be very bad among journalists, it will create all kinds of professional complications, so please do not have it, and so on, themselves wanted the Chief Justice to come in. Now they object to it. Why? It is because they do not want a Press Council. They do not want any regulation of any of the powers that they exercise today. The great dictators that they have developed into, they do not want any such regulation. It is the usual run with all dictatorial tendencies. So, they do not want this Press Council. But I say it is very important that there should be a press council.

The only question that now remains is whether it should be a statutory council or a willing co-operative organisation of the journalists themselves. On that question, I can say that most of the prominent witnesses felt that a Press Council with no statutory powers cannot function in this country. That was the general opinion.

Now, why are they opposing all this? I fail to understand, those very same people talking in two different voices. That is something which is not expected of those who run this great industry, on which rests democracy and the freedom of this country.

In conclusion, I would only say: let us not be deflected from our path by the hue and cry or the generous uncalled for advices given by persons who are interested...

**Acharya Kripalani:** Only Government will be deflected, not the House.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** If the House is there with us, Government will have to be there with us. I have no doubt about it.

**Acharya Kripalani:** Whatever they do, you will do.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** I am sure the Government are with us. That is what I can assure my hon. friend Acharya Kripalani of.

I was saying that they are interested parties. They are today holding most of the papers under their control. They are also dictating the policy of the newspapers. They are also trying, by degrading the standards of journalism, to push up their circulation; and decency and right standards have no meaning for some of them. So, are we going to listen to their advice? Or are we going to listen to the advice that is generally being given by this House, the advice which I have heard yesterday as well as today, and which I hope will be heard even on the subsequent days?

I can assure you that the Press Commission went into every detail, applied their mind objectively in an unbiased manner and then only came to the issues.

One more request I would make to Government, before I resume my seat. And that is in regard to the actual fixation of the price-page schedule. Unfortunately I forgot that point earlier. We have recommended that there should be a maximum and a minimum. There is nothing like the rigid formula of the old days, of price per page. We had abstained from mentioning any schedule just then, for two reasons; firstly, one did not know when actually the recommendations contained in the report will be implemented, and what the newsprint price will be then; and secondly, it was but fair that any schedule that should be fixed should be fixed in consultation with the parties concerned, or in other words, Government and the parties concerned should consult each other. That is why we did not fix any schedule. Moreover, any attempt to fix it on any costing as the basis or any member's own ideas as the basis would be wrong.

I know, a very good price-page schedule can be worked out, which will help the papers who should be helped, and who deserve to be helped, and at the same time allow a fair margin of competition without its degenerating into a circulation war or a war of attrition and elimination. That is practicable. I know it, and if it becomes necessary, I am prepared to give whatever advice I can give at the right moment.

5 P.M.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Shri D. C. Sharma. Hon. Members must be brief. Almost all points have been covered.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** Sir, I am afraid not.

**Shri S. S. More:** Members themselves are points.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** I would be failing in my duty if I did not pay a humble tribute to Shri M. L. Chowla, who was Secretary of this Commission. He was a person of great culture and he embodied in himself the responsibility and conscientiousness which should characterise our public service. It is a pity he was snatched away from us, but I must say that this Report is, in some measure, a tribute to his hard work.

I must say that it is a judicial document, and it has been judged all over the country and has not been found wanting. Of course, reactions to this Report have been varied, but by and large, the Report has been accepted, in the main, by our countrymen. It has been accepted by the Congress Party in the main and I am sure our Parliament will also come to a similar verdict on this Report. I have not come to judge this Report, but I feel that this Report is judging us. This Report is there to ask us what we are going to do with regard to the infant democracy that we are building up in this country.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I have been a student of newspapers all my life,



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and if I can say something, I must admit that I have been brought up on the *Vande Mataram* edited by Lala Lajpat Rai and also the *People* which was edited by that great patriot of India, and my standards of journalism are derived from the study of those two papers. If I can mention some other paper, I must say that I have been more or less a regular reader of the *New Statesman and Nation*. I think if we are to judge the prevailing journalism in the country, it would be found very much wanting, because the journalism that we have in India at present savours of those characteristics which belong to an acquisitive society. We are trying to demolish that acquisitive society, but somehow the exponents of that philosophy of life have established their stranglehold on the newspaper industry of our country.

I do not want to go into those arguments which have already been put forward, but I must say that this kind of unwholesome tendency is not going to work for the soundness of that democracy which we want to build up in this country. It has been said that our newspapers reach only 7 per cent of the population of this country. But even if there be literacy in this country in a measure larger than it is now, I am sure our newspapers will not be able to go down to the masses. It is because these newspapers today are produced in a kind of artificial atmosphere and they are written for a kind of intellectual who does not exist, and they subserve those interests which are not genuine. For the health of democracy, we want those papers which will appeal to the average man, and I must say that the papers about which we have been talking—I do not want to mention their names; the metropolitan papers and all that—do not touch the heart or imagination of the masses. It has been said that these papers have a great deal of influence. I must submit that we have been over-rating

them in their influence. If their influence had been as much as was talked about, I submit most of us would not have been in the House today. Because their only policy is either to flatter the Government at the wrong time or to embarrass the Government.....

**Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** At the right time.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:**.....at a time when the Government need their support. I think these are not healthy traditions of journalism, and on account of these, we cannot build up a sound kind of democracy. I would, therefore, say that we need that type of journalism which stands for freedom all along the line and stands for social justice. Those persons who do not know any kind of freedom excepting the freedom of the purse, and those persons who do not know any kind of social justice excepting the lack of it, cannot be the guardians of our Press or our democracy. I therefore, stand for the small man and the small institution and the small paper. Who are the small men in the newspaper industry? The small men are the working journalists. It is with their blood, sweat, tears and toil that we read the morning paper everyday, and I feel ashamed of myself when I find that they work under conditions which, I should say, are not very decent. I do not want to use a very harsh language because that would not do any good to anybody. I would also say that they are denied all those things to which they are entitled, and I do not see any reason why the recommendations which the Press Commission has made for the betterment of their lot—that is a very objectionable phrase which I have used, but that is the only phrase which I can think of at this time—for their amelioration, should be accepted *in toto*. I know attempts are being made to take away even those things from them, their starting pay of Rs. 125 and their maximum of Rs. 250 or something like that. I know attempts

are being made to whittle down those recommendations also. But I would ask this House, through you, to see that this bare minimum which has been given to them should not be taken away in any case.

My second point is this. It is only a bloated democracy that needs bloated papers. Democracy is essentially an institution for the small man, and the small man would be content with a small newspaper, provided it is honest and unobjectionable, fearless and independent. Look at the newspaper map of India today. Before the Partition, I used to find so many papers published at district headquarters. I come from a very small district and even there, we used to have two or three papers. But what do I find today? I find that the map of India in terms of internal newspapers has been painted red and all those small newspapers have disappeared; they have been liquidated. But if we want to reach the average voter, the average citizen of India, we need those newspapers. What is happening to the regional language newspapers? Of course, some of them are thriving; but I know also how they are able to survive. But those which give honest, unbiased opinion do not have much chance of coming up. I therefore say that the small newspapers should be protected in the same way as we are protecting the small industries, the cottage industries and the medium industries. In India we do not think in terms of big industries only but we think in terms of these types of industries also. In the newspaper world also we should think in terms of these small papers. I think there should be some kind of cess, levied upon those who have made money in all kinds of ways and given to these small newspapers so that they can become the backbone of our newspaper combination in this country. What I mean is this. The principle that is being followed in other spheres should be applied here also and I think the easiest way of doing it is this, that we should have the price-page scheduled.

It is said that there is a hue and cry in the Press. I do not see anything of the kind. I go to the lobbies often and I go to the central hall. But I do not know where this hue and cry is to be found. They say the hue and cry has ended and tumult and shouting has died. Now people have come and tumult and shouting commendations.

Another point I want to deal with is the news agencies. India is not so rich in news agencies, taking into account its population and its size and its importance, as some other countries are. But, whatever news agencies we have in India at present are leading a very precarious existence. It is said that there was a king called Midas and whatever he touched became gold. The kind of persons we are having here are called Midas, by some hon. Members. But, whatever they touch becomes dross. It becomes something different from what it used to be.

**An Hon. Member:** Grey?

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** Our news agencies should be protected at all costs because people do not read the newspapers so much for their views. Each one of us has his own views and unless we find our own views reflected in the paper we do not care very much for its views. We do not go to the newspapers for the views they give but for the news they give. If the news comes from a tainted and corrupt source, I think, all the function of news is gone.

There was a 'Press Baron'—not in this country; in this country we do not have many Press Barons; there are some who aspire to be such and this report I am sure will put an end to their aspirations. But there was a story about a Press Baron in some other country who said if a dog bites a man it is no news but if a man bites a dog that is news. That was the definition of news that he gave.

[Shri D. C. Sharma]

I would say that if these agencies are not to follow the path which has been followed in some other countries, we must have a corporation, because, only with the help of a corporation we can ensure a steady flow of honest and reliable news; not that kind of news which will make us scared, but that kind of news which will make us pause and think. It is only then that we can do so. I know that our newspapers are becoming auxiliaries of big business. Our newspaper agencies are also on the road to that. The case of the UPI has been mentioned here, very sad case, a very tragic case. But, who knows that the PTI may not also follow the same road some day? It is not insured against such eventualities. Therefore, I will say that if we want the steady flow of honest and reliable news, the best thing that we could do is this, that we should accept the recommendations of the Press Commission and have a corporation. Only then can we be able to get for our newspapers that kind of food which will be healthy for them.

It is said very often on the floor of this House that we are copying from others. When we were discussing a Bill some days back, we were told by somebody that that Bill was a copy of some other Bill which was passed in some other country. I do not want to mention the name of the Bill. But, I say, here is a report produced by Indians, written for the Indian nation, written for the Indian people and it is a report which is our own and we should accept it. This report is not an interrogatory mark; it is not an exclamation mark. It is an imperative, a categorical imperative and I will say that the Government should accept this categorical imperative and without whittling it down, they should implement it. The report does not cry for debate. We are debating while things are drifting from bad to worse. It is not the time for debate; it is time for action. The report demands action; the nation demands action; our demo-

cracy demands action and I am sure this report will be implemented as early as possible.

**Shri Thimmaiah** (Kolar-Reserved-Sch. Castes): I welcome this report as a solid contribution to the growth of democracy and a democratic Press. When the Commission was appointed it was not welcomed by a few big papers but it was welcomed by a large section of the people and a big majority of the papers in this country. Now this report is also welcomed by a very large section of the people in the country and the majority of the newspapers, because it has provided an opportunity to the public and the Government to understand certain facts about the Indian Press. During investigation by the Press Commission certain startling facts which have come to light have made the public and also the Members of this House to sit and realise dangers inherent in the unrestricted growth of certain tendencies in the Press and these tendencies are associated with monopoly and concentration. These practices may be justified by the big papers but their continuance is not consistent with the object of the socialistic pattern of society. Government is wedded to achieve the socialistic pattern of society and these tendencies are in the way of achieving this. Today this newspaper industry is no more an individual or a co-operative venture. It is a big business and the principles of the business are allowed to determine the policy, growth and the objectives of the newspapers in this country. In this country the small and the medium papers have been crippled and made ineffective, and they have to exist at the sufferance of the big papers, whereas the big papers exist on the resources of the big owners. The policies of the big newspapers are determined today by their own selfish interest, particularly the industrial interest. Their policies have been determined by jute, cement and crossword puzzles. That is what is coming to the public

and also to the Press today. The small and the medium papers have been squeezed by unfair competitive practices such as rate war, price cutting and advertising cornering methods. We have seen in the Report how the proprietors of big papers can exploit the advertisers and also the news agents. If an advertiser has to book space in one of the papers of the group or chain, he is compelled to book space in the other papers of the chain, and if he does not do so, the proprietors will quote a combined rate for the advertisement. Similarly, we have seen if a news agent has to handle one of the papers, he is compelled to handle a proportionate number of other papers. This is how the proprietors exploit the news agents and advertisers. With these developments the small and medium papers in this country have closed their institutions, particularly after the withdrawal of the price-page schedule early in 1952. We are aware that this price-page schedule was introduced as a war economy measure and it helped the small and medium papers to come up for a period of eight or nine years, though it was not the objective of the price-page schedule. Armed with this experience the Press Commission has suggested the re-imposition of the price-page schedule in order to see that the small and medium papers maintain themselves in the teeth of opposition by the big papers. This is a major recommendation of the Commission, and, in fact, it is the sheet anchor of the Press Commission Report. If this is implemented, I think the small and medium papers will be in a position to have some marginal income to pay their working journalists the minimum wages; the working journalists can have the benefit of provident fund also, which the Commission has recommended. This prospect of live and let live, this prospect of equitable and fair distribution of resources, this prospect of improved working conditions for the working journalists, all these are dreaded by the big papers, who do not want any recommendation of the Commission to be implemented by Government.

They have started a cold war and they want to retain the privileges and the benefits of the lop-sided state of the Press, which is opposed to the interests of the readers and the public today. They expect the readers to enjoy the fruits of concentration and monopoly and the products of large resources of enterprise. This is how the big papers have hindered the progress of small and medium papers in the country. The small and medium papers, which have the backing of public opinion in the country, have suffered a loss and they have no scope to exist in the country if the tendencies that are existing among the big papers were to continue and if the recommendations of the Commission were not to be implemented by Government.

Coming to working journalists, these journalists are the back-bone of the industry, and the big proprietors feed on their blood. I do not want to say much about them because all other speakers have spoken about the working journalists. We have seen their condition, which is worse than that of the factory workers in this country. It is stated in the Report that the working journalists' starting pay is very low; they do not get their letter of appointment; they do not even get their notice of termination when their services are dispensed with. There are no set of rules which govern their salaries, leave, benefits of retirement, etc. All these are dealt with in detail by the Commission, which has recommended certain measures to improve the condition of the working journalists. The Commission has said that their position is very responsible and they have to discharge their duties in the interest of the country. The position of the working journalists in an independent country like India today is more responsible; it is the working journalists who mould public opinion and who lead the public on the path of progress; it is the working journalists who guide the public and make the public understand the policies of Government, par-

[Shri Thimmaiah]

ticularly, a policy like the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society in this country. If the recommendations of the Commission, as far as the working journalists are concerned, are not implemented, I do not think there will be any enthusiasm on the part of the working journalists, and the paper industry will go to dogs. By implementing these recommendations, Government is not doing any favour to the working journalists. After all, it is justice that they are doing to the working journalists and it is long due to them. On the other hand, by implementing these recommendations, we are implementing our socialistic pattern of society and there is no doubt about that. I feel this is the first step towards the implementation of our socialistic pattern of society, that is, by accepting and implementing the recommendations as far as the working journalists are concerned in this country.

Today the role of the newspaper is not only selfish but also detrimental to the interests of the public in a way. In my own humble experience, I may give a few instances. I have seen certain newspapers whose proprietors are big business people, who expect certain favours from the Ministers, who expect certain import or export licences, permits, etc., from the Ministers. If the Ministers or the Government do not give them those things, they raise a hue and cry in their newspapers and mislead the public by misinterpreting the policies of the Government, and sometimes even carry on an anti-propaganda with all hue and cry personally against the particular Ministers. This is how these big papers behave in this country; this is how they misuse the freedom of the Press that the Government has given. It is not a freedom of the Press; it is a freedom of three or four big proprietors and they use this not as a freedom but as a licence to achieve their own selfish ends. Therefore, the Commission,

with a learned High Court Judge, has deeply gone into the problem and examined every aspect of it relating to the progress of the country and also to the interest of the Press, and has made certain recommendations. These recommendations are reasonable and I do not think there will be anything detrimental to the interest of the Press if these are implemented. The Government will only be doing justice to the country and also to the people by implementing these recommendations.

One word more. We have seen in the report how these advertisers bring pressure on the proprietors and the news is suppressed. I have seen certain newspapers, fifty per cent. space of which is full of advertisement and there are hardly any columns left for the news. What news do they give? They give very very unimportant news which do not interest the public, which do not attract the masses and which do not educate even an ordinary man in the street. Such papers exist today just for the sake of their livelihood and to fulfil the selfish interests of the proprietor and not to educate the public. For instance, take the crossword puzzles. I have seen in my State that there is a paper which is purely meant for this RMDC. I have seen no news in that paper except for some points. These are sold at one anna and they consist of about two or three pages. The owners of these papers live on the blood of the people and the working journalists and I request that all these things are put an end to and the recommendations of the Commission are implemented by the Government.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Shri Tek Chand.

**Shri Dabhi (Kaira North):** I request you to look to this side also.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I know; I am seeing to all sides. Hon. Member will be called on Monday. I have been

calling—almost all Members who have tabled amendments except perhaps Shri Dabhi. He is the only other person. I am calling other hon. Members who have not tabled amendments. I have called journalists and I have called persons who are not journalists; I have called persons interested and I am coming to persons un-interested.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal:** I have not tabled any amendments.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I will call Shri Kamath after Shri Tek Chand.

**Shri Tek Chand (Ambala-Simla):** I feel impelled to join the chorus of tributes paid to the members of the Press Commission from every section of this House. Bouquets were never more readily showered and never more richly deserved. There is hardly a facet of the Press problem which has not been examined by the members of the Commission. Every side, bright or black, good or evil, which pertains to the Press and the working conditions were deeply examined with thoroughness, with fairness and with objectivity.

The Press is a great power. It is quite true that it is a great power for good as much as for evil. I pay my tribute to those great journalistic pioneers who through their pen served the freedom struggle. But I will not conceal my feelings of disgust when I find journalists going down to the level which is derogatory to their great status, to their great avocation.

It is but natural to concentrate on one's rights but it is painful to forget one's responsibilities. When I alluded to the powers of the Press, I said that they were great because I have known that if the Press has taken up a right cause, it is elevated and it is brought to the forefront of every thinking citizen in the country but on the other side their powerful pen had done considerable damage. Their quills have a capacity to ruin. I wish I could borrow for a few minutes today the whim and vigour and the verve of

my hon. friend, Shri Joachim Alva. I wish I could import into my speech this afternoon the warmth and vehemence of my hon. friend Shri H. N. Mukerjee.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Member is equally young.

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon):** And perhaps more vigorous in his speech than any other Member.

**Shri Tek Chand:** This quill of theirs which sometimes spills ink has the potentiality to spill blood. They can create discord; they can disintegrate communities. One of the notorious contributions made by certain sections of the Press is when they endeavoured to disintegrate communities by bringing about disharmony among them because of the venomous writings and because of the dreadful vituperatives indulged in by rival sections. This is the notorious fact *vis-a-vis* the vernacular Press. I feel the responsibility of the Press that circulates in the rural areas or the district towns is much greater because the reading public is more prejudiced and more gullible and therefore apt to accept the printed word as absolutely precise, absolutely correct and absolutely authentic.

It is high time as mentioned by the distinguished members of the Commission in their report that there was developed a code of ethics. Journalists like members of the medical profession and members of the legal profession, ought to have a code of ethics. Among the legal fraternity, there is the Bar Council; among the medical fraternity, there is the Medical Council. They lay down professional etiquette and they lay down the rules of dos and don'ts that are to be followed and that are to be eschewed. But it is curious that this great fraternity of journalists distinguishes itself by a complete absence of any code of ethics, any code of journalistic etiquette, any code of journalistic propriety. Therefore, the suggestion that there should be an

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All India Press Council is most timely. It is high time that there is a body enjoying the confidence and the respect of the people and receiving the official recognition—a body which should be able to intervene whenever there are notorious deviations and deflections from the correct course of what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.

Hon. Members have drawn the attention of the House to a number of such deviations. Advertisements may bring in money; perhaps it is not very objectionable to devote some space to the advertisements.

**The Minister of Commerce and Industry and Iron and Steel (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari):** It does bring in money.

**Shri Tek Chand:** So far as the nature of the advertisements is concerned, there should be a sharp line of distinction between advertisements which are obscene, advertisements which are otherwise objectionable or advertisements which are likely to mislead and sidetrack people and advertisements that are unobjectionable. For instance, we have in certain sections of the Press advertisements regarding prurient pornographic literature, illustrated and otherwise. We have advertisements regarding love filters, love potions, kavachas and other yantras. There are advertisements which relate to aphrodisiacs, rejuvenators and pretentious claims to cure incurable diseases. There are again the magical charms and the astrologers benedictions—all available on payment of a little money. If some of these advertisements were tabulated, perhaps, only to look at a few is sufficient in order to see what a stain and stigma they are on the journalistic code of ethics. Newspaper reporting is a very responsible matter. A news reporter has to play the role of a judge as much as of a jury. When facts are represented and the representation is only partial, deliberate injustice is being done to the

person whose side of the picture is being suppressed. When comments are offered they are usually one-sided. To do evenhanded justice is a very notable role and the Press whenever it is called upon to sit in judgment of facts must be very circumspect and very often it is not.

Sir, it is very improper to indulge in suppression of truth; but, not only there are several instances of *suppressio veri* but there are also instances of *expressio falsi*. Deliberate, calculated expression of what is fiction and not fact is not unknown to a certain section of the Press.

Regarding Press legislation I have a word to say. Freedom of the Press is an expression which is calculated to carry a variety of meanings and very often the people have been misled by it. Freedom of the Press, according to my humble judgment, is sufficiently provided for in article 19 and in no way abridged by article 19, sub-clause (2) of our Constitution. I am of the view that section 124(a) of the Indian Penal Code ought to be repealed, whether the persons affected are the journalists or others.

There is one more matter to which I wish to invite the attention of this House and that is relating to the law regarding contempt of court. It happens to be the lot of the journalists that they very often are on the wrong side in contempt of court matters. In so far as contempt of court is committed in under-mining the dignity of the court there will be no difference of opinion that it ought not to be so. But, it is not that aspect of the contempt of court to which I am alluding. The contempt of court which is of the most serious nature is when a newspaper takes sides regarding the suitors appearing in a court and more so in criminal cases when they arrogate to themselves the powers of the court and adjudicate causes long before they are due thereby prejudicing the witnesses who have to step into the witness box and the jurors or the

judges who are called upon to give their comments upon the facts as found in the record. It will not be out of tune here to invite the attention of the House to a fairly recent but a very serious case of contempt of Court. *The Daily Mirror* is a well-known illustrated newspaper of England with a very large circulation. The editor of that powerful paper in a murder case, which was yet to be tried, gave all the lurid and horrible details—partly correct and partly incorrect—of the life history of the accused who was to be tried. If the man were to be hanged, then the editor of that newspaper had virtually hanged him. Lord Chief Justice Goddard thought it was a great unpardonable infraction from the right cause. The editor was hauled up for contempt of court and in the recorded history of the case he was imposed the highest penalty, namely, the editor had to pay £10,000 as fine with three months of imprisonment because of the great harm that is done to a man who is awaiting his trial. It is a question of life and death.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I allowed the hon. Member to speak for a few more minutes because he said he had some special remarks to make on contempt of court. He has now started speaking on various other matters. Therefore, I am obliged to ask the hon. Member to resume his seat.

**Shri Tek Chand:** Sir, will you give me a minute more?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Every hon. Member who exceeds the time wants one more minute.

**Shri Tek Chand:** If you allow me one more minute I will close.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I won't allow. Hon. Members come and tell me that they will finish in ten minutes and then embarrass me, after I have called upon them to speak.

**Shri Kamath:** The anxiety of Parliament to discuss the Press Commission  
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Report has been reflected not merely in the number of occasions on which this matter has been raised by way of questions in this Lok Sabha, but also by way of a little surprise the other day in the Rajya Sabha too, when after due apology by the Minister for Information and by the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, the affair was amicably settled. That the nation outside of which this House and the other House are a mirror, is also equally exercised about this matter there is no doubt whatever.

The Press Commission was born in the face of opposition by vested interests as the Prime Minister, some time in 1951, told a Press Conference. I believe in reply to a question asked here in Parliament he said that some of the Press proprietors were not quite in favour of a Press Commission but the Government would go ahead. Later on also, as you will see from the Press Commission's Report, the behaviour of some of these vested interests of the Press has not been quite commendable or satisfactory. Even now there is opposition from some of these quarters to some of the vital recommendations of the Press Commission.

The Press Commission, I am afraid, has failed to stress one aspect of the matter relating to the Press in India today; and that is the growing—shall I put it—unholy alliance between political power and finance capital. In other words, it is an unholy alliance or wedlock between the Government and finance capital of the Press.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Is the hon. Member competent to speak on that matter?

**Shri Kamath:** I leave it to you to judge Sir. It is an alliance between Government, the ruling party, and what are called the press barons. It is not the press barons alone who are to blame but I think you will permit me to say that the villain of the piece are not the press barons, but Government itself. The manner in which



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and the diverse ways in which Government have seduced the press barons are, in some ways and on some occasions, reprehensible.

**Dr. Keskar:** Do you credit Government with that much? It is good.

**Shri Kamath:** The way in which the Press is going now, I am afraid the day will not be far off when it might even become an annexe of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and perhaps a handmaid, if that word can be used, of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Information.

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava:** The Minister of Agriculture is also sitting there.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** Every Minister needs the help of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

**Shri Kamath:** Right from the basic material of newsprint to the condition of working journalists who provide the fodder for the Press—from that stage to this stage—the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is vitally concerned. The July-December import policy for newsprint amply confirms this particular charge of mine against the Government. The Ministry and the Government, have according to that policy, permitted only newspapers to import newsprint either directly or through established importers, and though there has been a protest against this policy from various quarters, from other newspapers, there has been no action so far from the Government. That shows that the Government, through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is vitally interested in controlling this aspect of the Press in India.

It is a well-known fact—I need not touch upon the way in which it is done—how material comes through the notorious Press Information Bureau.

**Dr. Keskar:** What executive authority has the Press Information Bureau?

**Shri Kamath:** There are other kinds of authority which are equally if not more subtle. The Press Information Bureau hands out articles, may be propaganda material for the Government, which are published either in the ordinary course in the papers or in special Independence Day supplements and similar supplements, even without acknowledgment of the source. I would request the hon. Minister to let me have all the hand-outs or rather the Independence Day supplements of the various newspapers in Delhi and outside—the English newspapers particularly—that were published on the last Independence Day, five days ago. That will give us an idea as to how much matter in those supplements comes from the P.I.B. I am given to understand that when the P.T.I. employees were on strike—or when they were about to strike—the proprietors of the Press or the Press barons or the Board of Directors, of P.T.I. at a stage, said: 'Let them do what they like and we will get the whole stuff from the P.I.B, and they will fill our papers with the necessary material and the columns will be duly filled up.' That is the way in which the P.I.B. works. I would ask the working journalists to take note of this growing menace and see to it that news is supplied not by the P.I.B. of the Government but by themselves, after their own diligent search for truth without fear or favour. What the relations between the Government and the Press should be was very well stated by *The Times* of London many decades ago but those words are applicable even today.

**Dr. Keskar:** There is very good relation between *The Times* and the Government.

**Shri Kamath:** *The Times* of London, I say, not of India. Those words were in reply to the attack by the Prime Minister there at that time whom

The Times had criticised and rebuked. The Times wrote:

"The purpose and duties of the two powers"—

"that is, the Government and the Press—are constantly separate, generally independent, sometimes diametrically opposite. The dignity and the freedom of the Press are trammelled from the moment it accepts an ancillary position. To perform its duties with entire independence and consequently with the utmost public advantage, the Press can enter into no close or binding alliances with the statesmen of the day, nor can it surrender its permanent interests to the convenience of the ephemeral power of any Government." And it went on to say:

"The first duty of the Press is to obtain the earliest and most correct intelligence of the events of the time, and instantly, by disclosing them, to make them the common property of the nation. The statesman collects his information secretly and by secret means, he keeps back even the current intelligence of the day with ludicrous precautions, until diplomacy is beaten in the race with publicity. The Press lives by disclosures;"

The Press lives by disclosures and if the Press fails to perform this function of disclosing, whatever the consequences, without fear or favour, the Press will have failed in its vital duty. The other day, the Finance Minister of Madras, Shri C. Subramaniam, lectured to the Press that it should not get its information, its material regarding Governmental affairs from elsewhere or in its own way but that it should take it from the authorised hand-outs. This shows again the growing tendency on the part of Government to curb the Press and to bring it under the control of Government. Today, I am afraid even the news agencies are willing to

be dominated, to be controlled, by Government. That is an unfortunate tendency. In my own State, Madhya Pradesh, the Opposition had levelled grave charges against the Chief Minister, Shri Shukla, and I am constrained to say here that the P.T.I.—I leave out the U.P.I. because it did not take sides, put out statements and comments on the side of Government and of Shri Shukla but refused to publish any of the statements, even a single line, issued by the Opposition in that matter. Yesterday, I got reliable information that Shri Jai Prakash Narain, had described the recent firing in Patna as daylight slaughter. I understand that the *Indian Nation* is the only paper which has published that part of his statement. No agency no other paper, has had the guts, the courage, to publish it.

As regards Jammu and Kashmir, there has been practically a brown-out of news, if not a black-out, and I charge that the Government is deliberately suppressing the free flow of news from and about Kashmir.

Mustafa Kamal once said that there are no oppressors and oppressed. There are only those who led themselves to be oppressed. Yesterday, answering a question of mine, the Prime Minister referred to the Press Delegation which covered his tour of the USSR and other countries, and it was said that the two Ministries concerned decided the personnel of the delegation,—the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. I fail to understand why the Press, the journalists' federation, the editors' conference, etc., did not raise any protest; why they did not ask the Government to leave the matter to them. Why did they leave it to be decided by Government. The AINEC and the Federation of Working Journalists were all willing to be controlled by Government in this matter. If they had only said 'no, we will select the personnel'....

Shri Joachim Alva: Is the hon. Member aware that the distinguished

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editor on whose behalf he put the question, went over to China as a member of the Indian Cultural Delegation and on his return wrote nasty articles against China? How could he be included by the neighbouring country of USSR? Once bitten, twice shy.

**Shri Kamath:** I didn't put the question on any body's behalf. I am sorry Shri Alva is not following what I said.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** How can the Ministry tell you all this? We are in possession of facts.

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**Shri Kamath:** I am not referring to that here. I am only saying that the ten journalists were selected and handpicked by the Government and neither the Working Journalists' Federation nor any other association of journalists has had any say in the matter when the Government selected the journalists to cover the Prime Minister's tour of U.S.S.R. All these illustrate the growing tendency, the menacing tendency of un-holy wedlock, and the un-holy alliance between

political power and the Press. This aspect of the matter has not been stressed by the Press Commission...

**The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh):** A bachelor is being charged with wedlock.

**Shri Kamath:** I hope that the Government will take note of this feature detrimental to the national interest and desist from thus interfering with the Press. Political power should be divorced from the Press, and if it is to serve the national interest, the freedom of the Press has got to be maintained intact.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Is the hon. Member likely to take more time?

**Shri Kamath:** I will take another five or ten minutes.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Member may continue on the next day.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned at Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 22nd August, 1955.*