

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): There are rumours to the effect that more persons were buried alive. This is given out by the Press. I would like to know whether the roll-call of the labourers had been checked and it has been ascertained that no more persons than disclosed were buried alive.

Shri Karmarkar: I have no first-hand information. As has been mentioned in the statement, what is missing is one labourer. I presume that the statement is based upon comparison with the roll-call.

Shri Vajpayee: How is it that the dead body of the labourer has not yet been recovered?

An Hon. Member: What is the difficulty?

Shri Vajpayee: They say they are still trying. The Administration has failed in this respect.

Shri Karmarkar: The statement makes it clear that they are still trying to recover it. Obviously, there is a part of the debris there and, may be, his body is below that debris.

Mr. Speaker: It is rather unfortunate that this should have happened. The hon. Prime Minister has said just now that the hon. Health Minister will see that a committee of enquiry is appointed with experts to find out what exactly the cause of this was and if it could have been avoided who was responsible for all this. Shri Nath Pai has said that two experts have given a statement that there is a wall which could have been supported easily and if that had been done there would not have been this accident. I am sure all these matters will be taken into account when the enquiry is ordered and a report is made. When the report is made I think it will be placed on the Table of the House for such further action as the hon. House may think proper.

Under these circumstances, I do not think it useful at all to have any dis-

cussion on this matter today by adjourning the House. Therefore I do not think any purpose will be served in view of what has been stated by the hon. Prime Minister. I do not give my consent to this.

12.12 hrs.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Speaker: Shri Surendranath Dwivedy has sent in a notice of a question of privilege.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): Sir, I want to say a few words. Sir, the other day you were good enough to tell me that it was receiving your consideration. According to me it is a very serious breach of privilege of the House. On that day when some discussion was taking place you were good enough in your wisdom to expunge certain portions from the proceedings of the House.

The purpose of my motion is not to censure the entire Press. They should have full freedom. But if expunged portions are published and that goes without notice and if you and this House do not take serious notice of it, I think, it will be creating a dangerous precedent in this matter.

What has happened is this. The expunged portions have been published in the Press on the 17th. The *Free Press Journal* of Bombay has published it on the 17th. That publication appears to me intentional because after publishing the expunged portion it is added that this was later expunged by the Speaker. It means that knowing full well that they have been expunged it has published it. This is intentional. I think it comes under privilege. I hope you will take proper steps to safeguard the dignity of the House because we observe sometimes there has been a tendency in certain sections of the Press not only to disregard the wishes of the House but also to defame sometimes Members of

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the House representing the people of this country. Therefore, I think it is a very serious matter which ought to receive your serious consideration.

Mr. Speaker: The matter relates to this. I expunged a portion which I did not think it proper to remain in the record. It was already intimated to the various sections of the Press. The Press were aware of it and no paper published it—the expunged portion. But, somehow or other, in the *Free Press Journal* of Bombay this matter which I had expunged appeared. And, underneath that it was also stated that this portion was, no doubt, expunged by the Speaker. There is not even a possibility of saying that he did not know this and published it inadvertently or by mistake. No more proof is necessary than this statement that it was deliberate.

Under these circumstances I have written to the Editor. The Editor may not know everything that happens during the night; somebody might publish it in the Press. I have drawn the Editor's attention to it and I have asked for an explanation. Usually such things are sent to the Editor. It is an important thing. After the receipt of this reply, if it is a matter that can be washed away with an apology I will do so; or I will bring it before the House for such action as it may deem proper. I do not want that any hasty action should be taken; nor should we be indulgent wherever the decisions of the House are deliberately flouted.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat): May I make a submission, Sir? You may in your wisdom take whatever decision you want as to what has to be done regarding the publication of the expunged portion. But I would like to draw the attention of the House that whenever a portion is expunged, I think it normally used to be done on the floor of the House and it was always intimated to the Member from whose speech it is expunged. Every Member knew that such a

thing was done. Here, actually, the portion expunged was a certain remark of Prof. Hiren Mukerjee. Actually he was not informed, that such and such a portion had been expunged. It was only late in the night that he knew of it when somebody from the Press phoned and told him that such and such portions of his speech had been expunged. I think it is only right that as soon as a matter is expunged it must be intimated to the House. At least the Member from whose speech it is being expunged should be intimated of the matter.

Mr. Speaker: I shall certainly do so. I do not know if it was not done due to inadvertence. I will inform the hon. Member concerned when I expunge such portions only which according to me need not be brought to the House because they affect the reputation of the House and if brought to the House it would not serve the purpose for which the expunction is made. In this particular case the hon. Member who made the remarks might not have been informed due to inadvertence. I will certainly see to it that in such a case the hon. Member concerned is informed of that fact.

12.1 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

Mr. Speaker: Before we take up any other matter, the hon. Prime Minister wants to make a statement.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Speaker, Sir, three days ago, on the 16th December, I received through our Ambassador in Peking, Premier Chou En-lai's reply to my letter of the 16th November. This letter has already appeared in the Press and so I need not give any details about its contents.

I read this letter with regret. It does not accept the reasonable and practical proposals which I had made