

Mr Deputy-Speaker. The question is:

Page 6, line 38, after "nomination" insert "and election" (30)

The motion was adopted.

Mr Deputy-Speaker. The question is:

"That clause 17 stand part of the Bill"

The motion was adopted

Clause 17 was added to the Bill

Clauses 18 and 19 were added to the Bill

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were then added to the Bill.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon I beg to move

"That the Bill be passed"

Mr Deputy-Speaker The question is:

"That the Bill be passed"

The motion was adopted

15-03 hrs

MOTIONS RE ANNUAL REPORTS
OF THE REGISTRAR OF NEWS
PAPERS

Mr. Deputy-Speaker Shri C K, Bhattacharya

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Dr Keskar) May I know the time allotted for this discussion and the time that I shall get in order to give a reply?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker Perhaps he may know it after the mover has spoken. Rather, I would like to know from him how long he would like to take for the reply. There are two hours allotted for this discussion. We have to conclude by 5 O'clock. Perhaps after the speech of the movers, the hon. Minister may know the time that he is likely to take. But, may I ask him how long he is likely to take?

Dr Keskar: A large number of points have been raised in the reports. Even if I mention them briefly, it will take about half an hour. So, I may take about 40 minutes for the reply. That is why I raised this point earlier.

Mr Deputy-Speaker 40 minutes may be taken by the movers and 40 minutes by the Minister. There will be 20 minutes left for all the other Members.

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta (Mahendragarh) There are two reports. I am also one of the movers.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will distribute the remaining time among all the other Members.

Shri C K Bhattacharya (West Dmajpur) In the beginning, I may submit to you that when the report of the Business Advisory Committee was placed before the House, at my request, the hon. Speaker agreed to extend the period by half an hour. He said, "I shall use my discretion and extend the period by half an hour." So, on the whole, we may take for this discussion 2½ hours, as the hon. Speaker had stated that day.

Dr Keskar That is for the Chair to decide.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: I only place before you what the hon. Speaker had stated that day.

Mr Deputy-Speaker. I find that he had stated so on that day. Therefore, we will go up to half past five. I have got a discretion to extend the time by half an hour which I shall do in this case.

Shri V. P. Nayar: Then it will be up to 6 O'clock.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: I beg to move.

"That this House takes note of the Annual Report of the Registrar of Newspapers for India for

[Shri C. K. Bhattacharya.]

the year 1957, laid on the Table of the House on the 8th September, 1958".

We are discussing today the reports of the Registrar of Newspapers for 1957 and 1958. These reports are the second and third reports that he has published. The first report was for the later half of the year 1956; it was something like a tentative report.

In discussing these reports, in the beginning, I should say that the appointment of the Press Registrar and the publication of the annual reports were suggested by the Press Commission. The Press Commission also suggested an amendment to the Press and Registration of Books Act so that the Press Registrar might be appointed and the provision for publication of the annual reports might be made.

So, when we discuss the reports of the Press Registrar, we do it in the background of the suggestion of the Press Commission and also the provisions of the Press and Registration of Books Act. It now becomes necessary to refer to what the expectation of the Press Commission was about the work of the Press Registrar and consider his report under the provisions of the Act itself. The Press Commission, at page 399 of its report, says:

"It should be the duty of the Press Registrar to bring out an annual report on the working of the press on its organisational side."

I request you to note the word 'organisational'. The Press Registrar is expected to put forward a report dealing with the organisational side of the press. The Press and Registration of Books Act, in section 19(g) says that the Press Registrar should bring out an annual report containing a summary of the information obtained by him about the newspapers in India giving an account of the working of

such newspapers. Here also, the Act anticipates that the report of the Press Registrar should contain facts about the working of newspapers in India.

So, in discussing these reports, we have to apply these two tests: whether they satisfy the requirements suggested by the Press Commission and also whether they satisfy the requirements made by the Act. The reports are intended to be useful publications and to ascertain extent the reports are useful. But I have got to say that they did not satisfy the requirements that were suggested by the Press Commission and are incorporated in the Act itself. This is not all. From the reports, we get certain statistics and tables and a catalogue of newspapers. But we do not find what is actually happening in the newspaper world in India in the working of newspapers and how the organisational structure of newspapers is undergoing a change under the new conditions that have developed. If possible, there should be a review of these things also, noting the undercurrents that are leading to this development. The undercurrents are not easily discernible for ordinary people but those who are dealing specifically with the press and its working and its organisation ought to know and understand them. One of the most important matters the Press Commission was concerned with was the trend in the direction of common ownership of more than one newspaper. The Commission, after analysing the extent of common ownership of various newspapers found that there was a considerable degree of concentration and the Commission uttered a warning that unless this was checked, it would assume dangerous proportions in future. What we expected of the reports of the Press Registrar was that he should have pursued the investigation taken up and suggested by the Commission itself and keep the public informed of the extent of common ownership

and the degree of concentration that has taken place or is taking place. I do not find the same in the report anywhere stated. Here the report lacks. Our knowledge of the organisational side of the press is not widened by going through these two volumes. Of course, what the Press Registrar has stated in the 1957 report is that a large number of newspapers had not supplied the necessary information regarding circulation and ownership. To that extent, the value of the study that he has made about the trend of ownership and circulation is a limited one, because he did not get all the facts before him and he could not make a study of the working of the newspapers as well. In the 1958 report he says that his efforts have been more successful, the efforts of the Press Registrar to secure information about newspapers in India. I sympathise with his plight and I share his sense of relief when he says that in 1958 it has been possible for him to secure information from a larger number of papers than he could do in 1957 because the owners did not comply with his request to submit the facts that he wanted. Even then, he has indulged in some strange logic. He says that the question of obtaining up-to-date annual statements from the publishers on which his study of trends in circulation and ownership is based still remains unsolved. Then he goes as far as to threaten penal action against the owners of those papers who have not submitted the facts. In the face of all this, he comes to a strange conclusion. In his opinion, the conclusion is accurate. The conclusion is that he has been able to secure a sufficient amount of data which gives quite a good idea of what the trend now is. At the same time, he dismisses in a sentence the pattern of ownership by saying that there has been no significant change in the pattern of ownership. What I submit is that on the facts that he could collect and has collected, this conclusion could not be arrived at. This conclusion overreaches the data and the facts

on which these reports have been based.

The working journalists have characterized his reports as a collection of dry facts. I believe they are right. What we wanted, as I have stated, is that the report should have contained a record, a review of current history. The newspaper world is in a ferment. As a result of it, the Working Journalists Act had to be passed and with that came the Wage Board. The Supreme Court case came and the Wage Committee came. As a result of all these, new forces came to operate and the newspapers and their organisations underwent structural changes. There are basic changes in the method of working of newspapers. These things have happened. These should have been a matter of study for the Press Registrar for his report. Thus, he has not done. I wish he had given a sufficient account of the changes that had taken place and his study of the interactions that have happened. I shall content myself with referring to one or two; I shall not go exhaustively into that.

The first report pointed out several lacunae in the working of the Press and Books Registration Act. But, the Government, for no valid reasons whatsoever, slept over them. The second report has brought out these lacunae in still greater details and in a more forceful way. I do not know what the Government will be doing now. The most important defect, in my opinion, is the method prescribed for authentication of titles. The other is about the determination of the ownership of papers. The Press Registrar has categorically stated that he has been able to bring about a co-ordinated policy. But, I am afraid, the facts are otherwise. There have been violations of section 6 of the Act. In every case of such violation, the Press Registrar has pleaded his helplessness to check it on the ground that the statute is defective. He goes for the opinion of the Law Ministry, and

[Shri C K Bhattacharya] in the report he says that for the present, this opinion is being accepted and is being put into action administratively. This is not the way a law should be put into action. A law should be precisely understood and effectively administered if it is really to serve its purpose. The statute lays down a guiding principle of authentication in section 6 that whenever a title is asked for, the Magistrate should ascertain that the same or a similar title does not exist in that State or in that language. In spite of this, I have got to say that titles have been granted which are not only colourable imitations, but exact imitations of the existing titles. Going through all these things that have happened, I hold the view that the officials of the Government are inclined to accept the statements of owners of newspapers without proper investigation and without proper verification. That is the view I have come to. The only conclusion that I can draw from these circumstances is that some extraneous factors come into play to subvert the law. This is a serious matter and requires a thorough enquiry by a Committee of Members of this House, whether the law is not being subverted to the interest of particular parties without looking to its proper application.

The case of certain Madras newspapers has assumed such proportions that matters have gone up to the High Court. I do not know whether this will be coming to the Supreme Court. Three newspapers were existing in Madras. At the same time, the same three titles were granted to other newspapers from another centre. I cannot say whether that could be done under the present legislation. That is for the hon. Minister to say. I believe that this is due to the imperfect understanding of the Act. What is defective in the Act itself is, there is no mention of the owner except in section 6 and there also, the owner comes in only to ascertain whether the title should be granted to a parti-

cular newspaper or not. The Act is going to be amended soon. I suggest that our Government should amend the Act in the way in which similar Acts are administered in other places like England and the United States. There, they do not put in the names of dummies as publishers and printers.

Here I have got a copy of the *Times*, London. There the printer's line is "Printed and published by the Times Publishing Company Limited", i.e. the entire concern takes on itself the responsibility for what appears in the paper. Here I have also got the *New York Times*. In that also, it is said "Published by the New York Times Company and the Publisher is Chairman of the Board". This, I think is the honest and straightforward way of doing the thing and not to put up dummies to accept responsibility for what other people do in the pursuit of their own interests. I suggest when the Act is amended it should be particularly looked into that the owner of the concern whether that be a company, firm, private limited or public limited, an individual or a trust, should be asked to declare himself as the printer and publisher of the newspaper so that the responsibility might be fixed at the proper place and the dummies might not be used as scape goats.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I might intervene and give a warning that I will not be able to give him more than half an hour. He must try to finish now.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: I am trying to finish. I hope I get this credit from you that I always finish before your bell rings.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: When I said 40 minutes, I had in mind both the movers.

Shri D. C. Sharma: There are other persons also who want to speak.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I know that.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: Even in section 6, the owner is mentioned only in the proviso. It says:

"Provided that where any declaration is made and subscribed to the magistrate is to make an enquiry into the ownership of the newspaper before the title is granted."

But the question is, does the magistrate make that enquiry? My submission is magistrates do not make enquiries about the facts of ownership. They keep themselves more concerned with the title itself. That is what is incomprehensible to me.

So far as the Press Registrar is concerned, he is required to do a lot of things in the matter of allocation of newsprint. I wonder how the allocation of newsprint concerns the Press Registrar. He is appointed to study the working of the Press and bring out a report which will give a complete idea as to the trend in the present working of the Press in India. I do not understand how the allocation of newsprint is allied with that work. In fact, my apprehension is that because the Press Registrar is having this extra work of allocation of newsprint licence, he does not find sufficient time to do the work for which the Act appoints him. Of course, I do not suggest that his services might not be utilised for this particular purpose; it might be, but only after he has discharged fully and properly the primary work for which he is appointed. That is not being done. Therefore, I might suggest that he may not be turned into a counterpart of the Controller of Imports and he may be spared the onerous work of distribution of newsprint licences; that might be left to the Ministry itself to do in their ordinary way.

I shall put forward certain suggestions categorically and request the hon. Minister to note them, and put them into action, as far as he thinks practicable. I think they are all practicable. My first suggestion is that an

attempt should be made to have the same definition of "newspapers" in all the four Acts—the Working Journalists Act, the Postal Act, the Newspaper Price Page Schedule Act and also the Press and Registration of Books Act. There is no meaning in having different definitions for "newspaper" in these different Acts. The definition should be the same and uniform. I agree that in the Working Journalists Act, for the purpose of being termed as a working journalist the Government has to declare in its Gazette which should be declared as a newspaper for that Act. I agree there. Otherwise, the definition ought to be the same in all the four Acts.

Then, the law should be made precise regarding the verification of titles and the intention of the proviso to section 6 should be cleared up so that the Press Registrar may not have to hunt in darkness as to what his duties are. Thirdly, title should be made available only to the owners, as I have pointed out from the example of *Times of London* and *New York Times*. Another suggestion is, if possible, the definition of "editors" should be made precise to exclude dummy editors. Here I am concerned personally. I am reminded of a sloka I read in the *Panchatantra* where it is stated:

यस्यार्थः तभ्य मित्राणि

यस्यार्थः तस्य वाञ्छदाः

यस्यार्थः सो नरो लोके

Up to that I understand. "people who have money have, friends and comrades. He who has money is considered a man in the world." But there is something else that I could not understand.

यस्यार्थः स च पंडितः

He who has money is regarded as pandit. That I could never understand. It was left for me to understand very late in life that the wise man was right in what he has said. And if he were alive and he could observe

[Shri C. K. Bhattacharya]

what is happening in newspapers in India, he would put it in a modified form.

यस्यायः सः सम्पादकः

He who has money is the editor.

If law could be amended to exclude this contingency, it should be done.

Then, the circulation should be checked properly so as to exclude papers sold as waste paper being included in the circulation. Here I do not speak by conjecture. A fascimile was published in the "Working Journalist" showing how a contract between the proprietor of a particular newspaper and somebody else that a large amount of papers to be printed and then sold as waste paper was entered into. From that I came to the conclusion that this is included in circulation, and this should be checked. Then, the Press Registrar should be relieved of the responsibilities of distribution of newspapers licences. Then, the misuse of newsprint should be checked. I know of cases in which it happened to such an extent that the Controller of Imports recommended cancellation of newsprints for particular papers. The Minister might find out that from the Commerce and Industry Ministry.

Then there are some minor things. The catalogue should be made more perfect. The names of the owners should be given in full and not in initials so that in cases of necessity he might be found out and responsibility fixed—not S. C. Roy or N. C. Sen or K. C. Sen. Then, a minor suggestion, that the Press and Registration of Books Act should be published in the report for ready reference.

Lastly, though it is not pertinent to our discussion and this Ministry, I should say that an attempt should be made to prevent misuse of teleprinters.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That this House takes note of the Annual Report of the Registrar of Newspapers for India for the year 1957, laid on the Table of the House on the 9th September, 1958."

The hon. Member referred to both the reports. I will give an opportunity to Shri Ram Krishan Gupta to move his motion. He will have fifteen minutes and all other hon. Members ten minutes each.

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta: 15 minutes are not sufficient.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He knows very well the number of hon. Members who want to participate in the discussion. Does he want other hon. Members also to help him or does he only want to have his own way?

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta: I beg to move:

"That this House takes note of the Annual Report of the Registrar of Newspapers for India for the year 1958, laid on the Table of the House on the 24th August, 1959."

जो रिपोर्ट हाउस के टेबल पर रखी गई है, उसको देखने से पता लगता है कि न्यू इन्फोर्मेशन, उनके मोनार्च और उनके सर्कुलेशन पर गवर्नमेंट का कंट्रोल बहुत ज्यादा लूस है। सबसे पहली बात यह है कि कंट्रोल को सख्त किया जाय, ताकि बोगस प्रकाशकों के सर्कुलेशन को आसानी से और इन्फोर्मली रोका जा सके। इस रिपोर्ट में भी इस बात की तरफ ध्यान दिलाया गया है और शुरू में ही इन मुश्किलों का जिक्र किया गया है।

".....there are a number of publishers who still do not realise their responsibility in this matter and who either fail to furnish the required information or do so after the scheduled date..... This, apart from being actionable under the law, results in incomplete data being available for each Report."

इसका मतलब यह हुआ कि अखबारों के मालिकों के को-ऑपरेट न करने से जो रिपोर्टें पैदा होती हैं, वह इनकम्प्लीट होती हैं और उसने जितनी इन्फार्मेशन की जरूरत है, वह पूरी नहीं होती है। इसलिये मैं माननीय मंत्री जी का ध्यान इस तरफ दिखाना चाहता हूँ, ताकि इस सिलसिले में पूरी कोशिश की जाये और अगर जरूरत हो, तो ला को प्रॉव्इड किया जाय ताकि जो अखबारों के मालिक इस किस्म की हरकतें करते हैं और कानून से बचने के लिये रिपोर्टें बेरी में सबमिट करते हैं, उनके खिलाफ एक्शन लिया जा सके।

इस रिपोर्ट में यह देख कर मुझे बड़ी खुशी हुई कि :

"In the Report for 1957 mention was made of certain difficulties that arose in the administration of the Press and Registration of Books Act which could not be resolved without an amendment of the Act. These problems have further been examined and proposals are now under consideration to amend the Act in order to remove those lacunae in it which give rise to these problems."

इसलिये मैं चन्द तर्कों के हाउस के सामने रखना चाहता हूँ, ताकि जिस वक्त इस एक्ट को प्रॉव्इड किया जाय, तो उन बातों को भी ध्यान में रखा जाय और उसके लिये पूरा कदम उठाया जाये। जसा कि मैंने पहले कहा है, सब से पहली जरूरत इस बात की है कि जो अखबार अगर सकुलेट किये जाते हैं, उन पर स्ट्रिक्ट कंट्रोल होना चाहिये, क्योंकि अक्सर देखने में आता है कि बहुत से पेपर इस किस्म के हैं और इस तरीके से खबरें निकालते हैं, जिसका बहुत बुरा असर पड़ता है। मैं यह मानता हूँ कि प्रेस को फ्रीडम होनी चाहिये, लेकिन हम को इस बात को भी समझना चाहिये कि किसी नेशन की बिकिंग और कैंसेलर का संज्ञा उस देश के अखबारों के सम्बन्ध में आ सकता है। इस लिए इस तरफ

ध्यान देने की सबसे ज्यादा जरूरत है। आजादी का यह मतलब नहीं है कि प्राइमेट मोटिव को महें-नगर रखते हुए अखबार चाहे जिस तरीके से खबरें निकालें। इसलिये मैं खास तौर पर यह अपील करना कि इस तरफ पूरी कोशिश करनी चाहिये।

इसके अलावा मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूँ कि अखबारों के स्टैंडर्ड को भी इम्प्रूव करने की बहुत ज्यादा जरूरत है। इसके लिये मैं हाउस के सामने दो तीन तर्कों के रखना चाहता हूँ और मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर गवर्नमेंट ने इस तरफ ध्यान दिया, तो वे डिफिकल्ट आसानी से दूर हो सकते हैं।

सबसे पहला सवाल है इंडिविजुअल ओनरशिप का। मुझे यह देख कर बड़ी हैरानी होती है कि ४४, ४५ फ्रीसदी के करीब मालिक अखबारों के इंडिविजुअल तौर पर मालिक हैं। यही नहीं, बहुत से अखबारों का मालिक तो एक ही वाहिद मालिक है। इकाअसर बहुत बुरा पड़ता है। इस तरफ ध्यान देने की सबसे ज्यादा जरूरत है मैं चाहता हूँ कि इन इंडिविजुअल ओनरशिप को जितनी जल्दी कम किया जाये, उतना ही ज्यादा अच्छा होगा। जब तक ऐसा नहीं किया जायगा, अखबारों का स्टैंडर्ड इम्प्रूव नहीं हो सकता है आप कहेंगे क्यों। इसलिए कि जब एक अखबार का मालिक एक वाहिद शख्स होता है, तो वह शुरू से लेकर प्राइमर तक हर एक काम में दखल देता है। वह चाहता है कि एडीटर जो एडिटोरियल नोट लिखे, वह उसकी मरजी के मुताबिक हो। उसकी यह कोशिश होती है कि उससे वह ज्यादा से ज्यादा नफा पैदा करे और इस किस्म की सेन्सेशनल न्यूज अखबार में शायद ही जाये, जिसको लोग पसन्द करें, पढ़ें, चाहे उस का असर कितना ही बुरा क्यों न पड़े। इसलिये इस किस्म का प्रॉव्इड किया जाना चाहिये, जिसमें एडीटर के काम में ओनर दखल न दे सके और यह समाज का

[Shri Ram Krishan Gupta]

प्रकाशक प्रकाशक होना चाहिये। जहाँ तक वे प्रकाशक हैं, प्रकाशक बनाने के लिये तीन शर्तों का संरक्षण है—एक मोनोपॉलिसि का काम, दूसरा उसका इन्टरम कराने का काम और तीसरा एडिटिंग का काम। अगर आप चाहते हैं कि प्रकाशक सबसे बेहतर हो, तो ये तीनों संरक्षण प्रकाशक प्रकाशक होने चाहिये। ये तीनों संरक्षण जितने ही प्रकाशक प्रकाशक होने, जितने ही इंटरम हो, उतना ही वह प्रकाशक प्रकाशक होगा और उस बजह से उसका स्टैंडर्ड उतना ही ऊँचा होगा।

आजकल यह डेढ़ी देखा जाती है कि जो भी प्रकाशक निकालते हैं, उनके सामने सबसे बड़ा मो एव कामरेस का होता है, जिससे देश को बहुत ज्यादा नुकसान होता है। इस किस्म की बहुत सी मिसालें हाउस क सामने रखी जा सकती हैं।

आज इस बात की बड़ी जरूरत है कि कॉन्सिस्टेंस और कारेसपांडेंस की ट्राइंग का प्रानर इन्टरम किया जाने, जिनक ऊपर प्रकाशक को तमान बागो का दादो-मदार है, क्योंकि जब तक जाजिस्ट या कारेसपांडेंट को पूरी ट्रेनिंग नहीं दी जायगी, वह इस काम को अच्छे तरीके से नहीं कर सगा। इनलिसे में धोरन करण कि इस तरह भी ध्यान दिया जाय, ताकि प्रकाशक का स्टैंडर्ड ऊँचा हो।

सन् १९५४ में एक प्रेस कमीशन नियुक्त किया गया था। उसकी रिपोर्ट में भी इन तमाम मुश्किलों का जिक्र किया गया था, लेकिन मुझे बड़े दुःख के साथ कहना पड़ता है कि वे तमाम जिंकफुल्टीज, जो उस काल थी, आज भी उसी तरह कायम हैं। बार साल गुजर गए हैं, लेकिन उन को दूर करने के लिये कोई खास कोशिश नहीं की गई है। इसलिये मैं यह अपील करण कि इस तरह ऊपर ध्यान दिया जाये। इस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट के संख्या २७० पर कहा गया है—

"We may now review the two conclusions arrived at. The right

of the owner to lay down in advance the editorial policy of a paper cannot be taken away, but this does not give him the right to dictate what news should be printed or what news should not be, or even the manner of presentation of the news. A definite danger exists of the news being twisted to serve the personal interests of the owner. There is also the danger that a paper, in order to increase its circulation and thereby securing greater profits, may adopt sensational, indecent writing and indulging in unethical practices."

यह रिपोर्ट १९५४ में पेश की गई थी और आज भी हम देखते हैं कि इस किस्म की बर्तें प्रकाशकों में पाई जाती हैं। इनलिसे इस तरह पूरा ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिये।

आखिरी बात जो मैं कहना चाहता हूँ यह है कि आज इस बात की सबसे अधिक जरूरत है कि कुछ प्रकाशकों को नेशन लाइव किया जाए और कुछ वेपरनस्टेट-प्रॉड हों, उनको स्टेट चलाए। हम देखते हैं कि जितनी तरकी पछले पन्ध सालों में हुई है उतनी शायद अंग्रेजों की हकूमत के दौरान में नहीं हुई थी। इस होने पर भी वारों तरह फ्रूटेशन ही नजर आती है आयुषी ही नजर आती है। जहाँ तक मैं समझ पाया हूँ इसका सबसे बड़ा कारण यह है कि हिन्दुस्तान के जो बड़े बड़े प्रकाशक हैं, वे बड़े बड़े कंपिटिस्टों के हाथ में कॉन्सिस्टेंस के हाथ में, मालदार आदमियों के हाथों में हैं और वे सही बर्तें लोगों के सामने, देश के सामने नहीं आने देते हैं इस बाते जब कभी भी कोई प्रोब्लिम टैप देश की तरकी का उठाया जाता है, उन्की वा तो मुबालिफत की जाती है या उन्की लोड मरुद कर लोगों के सामने रखने की कोशिश की जाती है या फिर उन्को कोई खास पहचान नहीं दी जाती है। वी इस तरह की मिसालें हैं, उन्की कमी नहीं है

धीर में उनकी हाजत के सामने रख सकता है। पिछले दिनों प्रत्यक्ष आपकी याच खेया इसी प्राज्ञ में स्टेट ट्रेडिंग के बारे में विलक्षण प्रस्ताव था और उसके बारे में एक दो रोचक कि बात हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स में जो एडिटरियल निकला और उसके अन्दर जो व्यूज एक्सप्रेस किए गए, में उन्हें दो बार फिरके हाजत के सामने पेश करना चाहता हूँ और उनकी पढ़ कर सुनाना चाहता हूँ। मेरे कहन का मतलब यह नहीं है कि अखबार वालों को व्यूज बर्गरह के बारे में एडिटरियल धाया करने की आजादी नहीं होनी चाहिये। मेरे कहने का मतलब केवल यही है कि आज हम देखते हैं कि हिन्दुस्तान का जितना भी क्रम है वह ज्यादातर कैपिटलिस्टों के हाथ में, रिपब्लिकनरी लोगों के हाथ में है और इन चीजों को सुधारने की शक्त उबरत है। इसके दो ही तरीके हैं। एक तो यह है कि उनमें से कुछ अखबारों को गवर्नमेंट अपने कंट्रोल में करे, उनको नेशनलाइज करे और दूसरा तरीका यह है कि गवर्नमेंट खुद अपने व्यूज पपर धाया करे।

पिछले दिनों चण्डीगढ़ में ए० आई० सी० सी० की एनथल मीटिंग हुई थी। उसमें भी हमारे प्राइम मिनिस्टर साहब ने इस बात का जिक्र किया था और यह कहा था कि हिन्दुस्तान के जो व्यूज पपर हैं वे ज्यादातर प्राइवेट सेक्टर की मामोपली बने हुए हैं। स्टेट ट्रेडिंग के बारे में जो नोट था, उसके अन्दर फिरके में प्रत्यक्ष आपकी पढ़ कर मुताता है :—

Nevertheless, that controversial institution brought into being by a cynical act of a former Minister of Commerce and Industry, who thus chose to throw a sop to the back benches of his Party clamouring for more socialism, has, even if it has not contrived to accomplish the country's bankruptcy, done nothing either to achieve additional prosperity. It is, therefore, difficult to understand why some Members of the Lok Sabha,

where the annual report of the Corporation was discussed last Friday, should have demanded that the entire foreign trade should be taken over by that body".

इस वास्त में सारा तार पर मपील करना चाहता हूँ कि हम इस और प्रत्यक्ष ध्यान दें। दूसरे कुछ देकों में हम देखते हैं बहुत से ऐसे पेरज हैं जिनके इन्डिया के अन्दर गवर्नमेंट का पूरा हाथ होता है। वहाँ पर अगर किलहाल ऐसा सही किया जा सस्ता है तो कम से कम गवर्नमेंट को इतना पार्ष बरकर में हाथ में ले लेनी चाहिये जिससे कि एडिटर बर्गरह की एन्वाइंटमेंट में उसका दखल हो सके और और उनकी हटावे के लिये एकधान न ले सके।

इसके अलावा जैसा मैंने अभी कहा और भी इस किस्म की चीजें हाजत के सामने आती हैं और उनकी इसीलिये जपदा अनुमियत नहीं दी जाती क्योंकि यहाँ की प्रेस कैपिटलिस्टों के हाथ में है। पिछले दिनों बंस को नेशनलाइज करने के बारे में यहाँ काफी चर्चा हुई थी। अगर आप उन दिनों के अखबारों को देखे तो आपको पता चलेगा कि कितना जरूरी, कितना इम्पोर्टेंट यह टापिक था, लेकिन जितना कम इम्पोर्टेंट, जितना कम अहमियत अखबारों ने इस टापिक को दी थायद अगर किसी टापिक को नहीं दी होगी।

आखिरी बात में यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि पब्लिक सेक्टर में अगर कोई डिफिकल्ट पडर आते हैं, कोई गलती हो जाती है, तो अखबार वाले उसको खूब उछालते हैं, खूब उन चीजों को ना-कामयाब बनाने के लिये प्रोत्तेयदा करते हैं। लेकिन उससे भी सीरियस गलतियाँ, उनसे भी जबदस्त गलतियाँ जब प्राइवेट सेक्टर वालों से हो जाती हैं, कैपिटलिस्टों से हो जाती हैं जो कि प्राइवेट सेक्टर में हैं, तो उनकी तरफ यह कोई ध्यान नहीं देते हैं। इस वास्त में कहना चाहता हूँ कि इस मामले की तरफ

पूरा ध्यान दिया जाए और सख्तियों का खीनरक्षित देश के बड़े बड़े इंडिविजुअल्स के हार्बो में झा गया है, उसकी खत्म करने की पूरी कोशिश की जाए। मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि आप इस ओर ध्यान देंगे।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That this House takes note of the Annual Report of the Registrar of Newspapers for India for the year 1958, laid on the Table of the House on the 24th August 1959."

Both the motions are now before the House, and both will be discussed together. Ten minutes will be given for each Member.

Shri V. P. Nayar (Quilon): Since you have given me only ten minutes, I shall have to confine myself only to the later report. I must characterise this report, at the outset, as very unsatisfactory. I am sorry to do that, but apart from the mass of statistical details which it contains, I think the report does not in any manner reveal the hopes which the hon. Minister had at the time he made the proposal to this House to appoint a press registrar

I would like to refresh his memory about it, for, on the 21st of November, 1955, while moving the Bill for consideration, he said:

"The main question is the appointing of a central registering authority with power also to appoint State registrars for the same purpose, the main object being to gather all statistics and data regarding newspapers and periodicals, so that at any time, we can have all authentic facts and figures regarding the newspapers at hand."

The most essential fact about a newspaper, according to me, is the fact of the profit which each newspaper has made. I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any indication whatever in this mass of statistical details, about the profits which have been

made, especially by the chain newspapers. We are not interested in merely getting an idea of the initials of the persons who own the newspapers. We are very much interested in finding out how the monopoly has grown, and what the effect of the monopoly which has grown is on the newspaper industry of India. I am sorry that the report has no indication at all about this point, which, according to me, is the most important.

Then, the press registrar in his report makes a very curious observation. He says in the introduction that:

"The Penal provisions have so far not been enforced on the presumption that the lapse on the part of the publishers was due to ignorance of law. Since the Act has now been enforced for about three years, this presumption would no longer hold good."

I ask the hon. Minister who allowed him to draw such presumption. Is it a presumption that ignorance of law will be excused? If my hon. friend has not been able to bring the offenders to book, for God's sake, let him tell us some other reason. This will be a very bad precedent. If in an official document, it is stated that ignorance of law continuously for a period of three years has been allowed to be taken advantage of by the offenders, I submit that it creates a very serious situation.

Then, my complaint about this report is that the press registrar has been guilty of very serious derelictions of duty. Apart from that, he has also usurped certain functions which it was never the intention of Parliament to give him. For example, I refer to his observation in page 2 of his introduction. He says:

"The entitlement of each newspaper was determined on a scientific basis...."

I do not know whether he used a telescope or a microscope—

"in accordance with its size, circulation and regularity of publication, and on the recommenda-

tion of the Press Registrar, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry allocated newsprint".

It is obvious that whatever allocations have been made by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry must have been on the basis of the report of the Press Registrar. Then he proceeds:

"This procedure ensured not only equitable distribution of newsprint, the import of which was restricted on account of foreign exchange difficulties, but also helped in checking claims for newsprint in excess of actual needs. At the same time, the genuine needs of all newspapers were adequately met".

I say that nothing is farther from the truth than this statement. Every person who has anything to do with the paper market knows that the whiter the newsprint the blacker is the black market. You cannot get any newsprint. If all the demands, especially of the small newspapers, have been met, where is the scope for black market at all? If the law of supply and demand operates in the way we understand, there could be no black market at all in respect of any article, the demands of which have been met. But here it is just the opposite. I shall explain how a situation has been created whereby it is impossible to enable the small newspapers to get their requirements of newsprint. How did they do it? Despite the fact that the Press Registrar claims to himself the wisdom of recommending to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, I had put it to the Minister of Commerce and Industry to contradict—this was during the last debate on the State Trading Corporation, and it was obvious that it was only on the recommendation of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry made allocations for the import of newsprint—that the Press barons have been permitted to import newsprint at the fantastic rate of

£81 per ton from Sweden, while the STC was able to get newsprint at £36 per ton, that is, 5 less. We know why. It is because it is not possible when the STC imports newsprint to operate private accounts. It cannot inflate the invoices. Therefore, it is impossible for it to do that.

I would not have referred to this but for the fact that in answer to a question in the earlier session, Shri Morarji Desai had given some details wherein we found that one or two very close relatives of some of the Press barons had been repeatedly involved in offences under the Foreign Exchange Regulations. If it is on the recommendation of the Registrar that newsprint has been allotted, how could this happen? The situation today is that newsprint has gone into hands which do not require them or which do not have any use for them, with the result that they are sent into the black market. Today the price of newsprint is anything from 100 to 150 per cent over the normal price. If it goes to the small newspaper and the demands have been met, I cannot understand the logic of saying so because in that case there would have been no black market at all.

Then the Registrar himself admits that he has excused in some cases because of the presumption which he has drawn about ignorance of the law. How does it affect? I find that mofussil newspapers or newspapers when they start for the first time experience inordinate delay in getting their applications through. On the other hand, I find that some of the big chain newspapers manage to get the applications through within the twinkling of an eye, the more so when they happen to be cases where the Press barons can cheat the workers. This has happened. I shall give some specific details and I would like the hon. Minister to contradict me if he can.

Here is a case. There were two papers, *the Pratap* and *Vir Arjun* from

[Shri V. P. Nayyar]

Delhi owned by one Shri Narendra. The same names have been given for papers from Jullundur, allegedly owned by Shri Virendra, his brother. Brothers are certainly different persons having different status in law. But if this is the way in which it is implemented, I do not know why the Press Registrar is functioning at all.

Then comes a declaration in favour of the Delhi *Hindusthan Standard* ostensibly owned by a different group. We know that the *Hindusthan Standard* of Delhi and the *Hindusthan Standard* of Calcutta are not owned by very different persons. Even to this extent, it is pardonable. Take the case of the Indian Express group of papers about which I will have to say something. Shri Ramnath Goenka—somebody said that initials will not do and that is why I give the full name—can defy the law laid down by Parliament with immunity. The Express Group of newspapers who were the owners of the *Indian Express* and certain other papers allegedly ceased publication of such papers from Madras, Madurai and Bombay and declarations of papers with the same names have been granted to different owners. Even when the Express Newspapers Limited were publishing the *Andhra Prabha* from Madras its ownership had been transferred to others. A declaration was granted for a paper of the same name to start from Vijayawada. How did it happen? A new declaration has also been granted to different persons—The *Andhra Prabha* (Vijayawada) Limited. Private companies can be created any time. Similarly, new declarations have also been granted to the *Indian Express*, Vijayawada to *Andhra Prabha* (Vijayawada) Private Limited. That is why there are now the same *Indian Express* in four companies. In all the four companies, Shri Ramnath Goenka happens to be the most important controlling owner.

There is an even more interesting case. I have nothing against the Press Registrar; I have not known him at all. It is due to the lack of knowledge. I have not got the time to read to you but in one place in the report it is said that the magistrates themselves do not know the law or do not behave in the manner in which they are expected. The paper *Screen* stopped its publication from Bombay and resumed its publication from Vijayawada. The Press Registrar himself did not know. The District Magistrate of Kistna writes a letter to the City Magistrate of Bombay and gets it okayed and the paper starts in the name of *Screen* from a different town. The employees in all these cases have taken timely action and reported the matter to the Government and even to the Prime Minister—let alone the hon. Minister in charge. Nothing has happened because the Press baron is so powerful.

There is again the case of the *Andhra Prabha* of Vijayawada which made its application. With this case, I shall conclude. You know that old newspapers have certain privileges and new newspapers do not have that much of privileges in getting imports of newsprint. It is rightly differentiated like that. But when the *Andhra Prabha* (Vijayawada) Private Limited applies for newsprint for a new edition of the *Andhra Prabha*, the Press Registrar and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry recommend the grant of import licence for the quantity asked for. I know personally—I would warn the hon. Minister to contradict—that it was by the strength of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri's will that the quota was cut. It is in the file and I would request him, if he has any doubt, to place the file before us. This is happening. I am submitting that this should not be allowed to continue. The newsprint made in India should be given to these Press tycoons. Let them not get the imported one, taking the profit here as well as also

where and the rest of the newsprint should be canalised only through the STC. Is the hon. Minister prepared to take up that suggestion? Then and then alone will this black market end. For starting a new newspaper, if you give the NEPA newsprint which for various technical reasons cannot stand competition with the other imported brands of newsprint, why is it that it is not possible for the Government to allocate the entire production of the NEPA newsprint to the big papers which have established themselves and try to give the imported newsprint which is undoubtedly of better quality to the smaller papers so that there can be fair competition in appearance, in quality and everything. Instead of doing that, despite the fact that the Press Registrar and his apparatus are functioning, they want the Press tycoons to make more and more profits even from the import of these newsprints. I am sorry that I did not have more time.

16 hrs.

श्री भक्त बर्मान (गठवाल) : उराप्यस
महोदय में शासन को बन्धवाद देता हूँ...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I shall request the hon. Members that they should conclude their remarks within ten minutes.

श्री भक्त बर्मान : मैं प्रयत्न करूंगा। लेकिन होता ऐसा है कि हम सब लोग एक साथ नोटिस देते हैं किसी बहस को उठाने की। अगर किसी की नोटिस दो मिनट पहले भी कार्यालय में पहुंचती है तो उस को प्रथम स्थान मिल जाता है। मैं ती सन्नद्धता हूँ कि अब शायद हम लोगों की ज्वांतिवी से कुछ कर सूचना देनी पड़ेगी ताकि ह्वांरा नाम पहले जा सके। और। मैं प्रकृत कल्पना। लेकिन यदि आप उचित समझें तो बाँका सब मँस सबक बका हैं।

में शासन को बहुत बहुत बन्धवाद देता हूँ कि कालिंर बहुत प्रयत्नों के बाद इस विषय पर वाद-विवाद करने का इस सदन को अवसर दिया गया। लगभग पंद्रह महीने पहले सन् १९५७ की रिपोर्ट इस सदन के समक्ष प्रस्तुत की गई थी। उसी समय में मैं तथा दूसरे कई सदस्यों ने इस बात की सूचना दी थी कि इस पर बहस की जाय। लेकिन मैं नहीं समझ पाया कि और बस्तुओं क्यों इसकी महत्वपूर्ण समझी गई। मैं आलोचना की दृष्टि से नहीं कहना चाहता लेकिन शायद कई ऐसे विषय थे जिन को प्रागे बढ़ाया जा सकता था। वे सभी इस से कम महत्व के विषय थे। कूक समाचारपत्रों को राज्य संस्था का बीबा आधार स्तम्भ फोर्ष एस्टेट ऑफ दि रेजम, माना गया है इस लिये मैं समझता हूँ कि भविष्य में इस बारे में कोई देरी नहीं की जायगी। इस लिये भी मैं इस सम्बन्ध में शास तीर से जिक्र करना चाहता था कि इस कानून को लागू हुए साढ़े तीन वर्ष हो गये, और यह पहला अवसर है जब इस पर वाद-विवाद करने का अवसर इस सदन को मिल सका है।

मैं मंत्री महोदय से पहली शिकायत यह करना चाहता हूँ कि इस सम्बन्ध का जो अधिनियम है उर.की धारा १९ (९) और उस से सम्बन्धित नियम संस्था ११ के अनुसार प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार के लिये अधिनियम किया गया है कि हर वर्ष ३० अप्रैल को या उस से पहले एक वार्षिक प्रतिवेदन वह प्रस्तुत करे। अभी तक रजिस्ट्रार की ओर से तीन रिपोर्ट निकली हैं। पहली रिपोर्ट ३१ दिसम्बर सन् १९५६ तक की थी जब कि काम शुरू हो रहा था, तथा उस जमाब करना था, और अफइं जमा किये जा रहे थे, तब वह सदन के सामने ३० अप्रैल, १९५७ को प्रस्तुत कर दी गई थी। लेकिन सन् १९५७ की रिपोर्ट ९ दिसम्बर, १९५७ को पेश की गई और सन् १९५८ की रिपोर्ट २५ अगस्त, १९५९ को पेश की गई। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस बाबत

[श्री बल्ल दर्सन]

बैं इतनी देरी क्यों हो जाया करती है। इस के बाद एक और बात है। इस का जो हिन्दी संस्करण निकलता है उस का तो कोई कहना ही नहीं है। सन् १९५८ की जो रिपोर्ट है — का अनुवाद हमें अभी तक नहीं मिला है। ही सकता है कि वह तैयार हो रहा हो या छप रहा हो। लेकिन इस के बारे में कुछ उदासीनता का व्यवहार किया जाता है।

मेरे आदर्शीय मित्र श्री भट्टाचार्य ने अपने प्रारम्भिक भाषण में प्रेस आयोग के प्रतिवेदन का उल्लेख किया था जिस के आधार पर प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार की नियुक्ति की गई थी। प्रेस आयोग ने जो महत्वपूर्ण सिफारिशों की थीं उन में से एक के अनुसार, यह सन्तोष का विषय है कि प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार की नियुक्ति की गई और उन के द्वारा हमारे देश में समाचार-पत्रों की जो संस्था है, उस का जो प्रचलन है, उस की जो समस्याएँ हैं, उन के बारे में प्रति बर्ष शिक्षा की जनता के सामने कुछ अधिकृत आंकड़े प्रकाशित जाते हैं। दूसरा कानून जो अब जा कर बहुत रो धी कर बन पाया है वह श्रमजीवी पत्रकारों के बेटन के बारे में है हालांकि उन्हें अभी पूरा सन्तोष नहीं हो पाया है। प्रेस कांसिल का मामला अभी भी सर्टाई में पड़ा हुआ है। मूल्यानुसार पृष्ठमूची की मूग मरीचिका का आश्वासन हमें मंत्री जी हर सेशन में दिलाये जा रहे हैं। मैं इस लिये इस बारे में जोर देना चाहता हूँ कि एक प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार की संस्था ही ऐसी है जो आन्तरीय मंत्री के सिधे नीचे ही प्रेस आयोग की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार काम करती है। इस लिये पहली रिपोर्ट, दूसरी रिपोर्ट, और तीसरी रिपोर्ट, तीनों में, जैसा अभी श्री भट्टाचार्य ने बताया था, प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार महोदय ने अपनी कठिनाइयाँ बतलाई हैं कि इस कानून के अनुसार काम करने में क्या अड़चनें पड़ रही हैं, और उन के सामने क्या कठिनाइयाँ आ रही हैं। आन्तरीय मंत्री जी ने एक बार लिये श्री इस बारे में आश्वासन दिया था

और मैं समझता हूँ कि वे आज हमें बतलाने की इजाजत करे कि जो कठिनाइयाँ इन तीनों रिपोर्टों में बतलाई गई हैं उन को दूर करने के बारे में मंत्रालय की ओर से क्या कदम उठाये जा रहे हैं और कानून में संशोधन करने वाला विधेयक कब हमारे सामने प्रस्तुत किया जायेगा।

मैं सिर्फ दो तीन मुख्य बातों की ओर आन्तरीय मंत्री जी का ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। इस वक्त जो मूल अधिनियम है उस की धारा ६ के अन्दर व्यवस्था की गई है कि जो नये समाचार पत्र प्रकाशनाथ मैजिस्ट्रेट के सामने पेश किये जायें जिन का डिक्लेअरेशन फाइल किया जाय, उन के बारे में क्या बातें आवश्यक होगी। इस के लिये वह भाषा प्रयोग की गई है:

“जो समाचारपत्र प्रकाशित होना है उस का नाम उली भाषा के या उसी राज्य के किसी अन्य प्रकाशित हो रहे पत्र के समान या उस से मिलता जुलता नहीं है।”

उस आदेश के अन्दर एक अनिर्वाय शर्त रक्की गई थी कि इस की जांच पड़ताल की जाय और प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार से पूछ लिया जाय। उस में बहुत सी हासत अवांछनीय कही गई हैं। मुझे प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार महोदय से धिकायत है कि सन् १९५६ की रिपोर्ट जो पेश की गई थी उस में उन्होंने पूरा एक अध्याय इस बारे में दिया था कि किस तरह से एक ही नाम के समाचारपत्रों के बारे में दो डिक्लेअरेशन दिये गये और किस में एकबट डाली गई और किस को स्वीकृति दी गई। उस का बहुत विस्तृत विवरण दिया गया था। फिर सन् १९५७ की रिपोर्ट में इस का जोड़ा सा उल्लेख है। पर सन् १९५८ की रिपोर्ट में, मुझे देखा कर आश्चर्य हुआ, इस का कुछ उल्लेख नहीं किया गया जब कि सन् १९५८ में बहुत सी इस तरह की घटनाएँ हमारे दे में हुईं।

अभी भी बी० पी० नायर ने चलते चलते "हिन्दुस्तान स्टैंडर्ड" का जिक्र किया। यह एक बड़ा ज्वलन्त उदाहरण है जिस के बारे में मैं कास तीर से माननीय मंत्री जी का ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। इस ऐक्ट के बारे में बतलाया गया कि राज्य सरकारों के जिला मैजिस्ट्रेटों द्वारा इस कानून का परिपालन किया जाता है, यानी उन के ऊपर इस के एग्जिक्यूशन की जिम्मेदारी है। लेकिन दिल्ली में सीधे केन्द्रीय सरकार की नाक के नीचे ही दिया तले भन्धेरा नह होना चाहिये। हालांकि कहावत तो यही है कि दिया तले भन्धेरा होता है। मैं समझता हूँ, दल्नी में जो फिं धे ही केन्द्रीय सरकार के अधीन है अगर नियमों की अवहेलना होती है, उन का उल्लंघन होता है तो प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार महोदय के लिये या स्वयं हमारी सरकार के लिये कोई घोभा की बात नहीं है। दिल्ली के "हिन्दुस्तान स्टैंडर्ड" का स्वरूप बिल्कुल वही है जो कि कलकत्ते के "हिन्दुस्तान स्टैंडर्ड" का है। मैं आज जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या इस में प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार महोदय की सलाह ली गई? अगर उन की सलाह ली गई, अगर उन से पूछ ताछ की गई, तो उन्होंने क्या सम्मति दी। और क्या कोई ऐसा विधान किया जा रहा है कि अगर ऐसी ग तियां हो जायें और बाद में उन का पता लगे तो माननीय मंत्री को या सरकार को कोई ऐसा अधिकार है कि वह इस में मداخلिलत कर सकें और जो गलती हो गई है उस का निराकरण किया जा सके?

मुझे एक बात देख कर बड़ा आश्चर्य हुआ, हम समाचार-पत्रों को बड़ी श्रद्धा की दृष्टि से देखते हैं। समाचार-पत्र के नाम के ऊपर हमारी बड़ी श्रद्धा की भावना रहती है, लेकिन जो परिभाषा इस ऐक्ट में उसकी की गई है, जिस के मुताबिक प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार को काम करना पड़ती है, वह बिल्कुल अर्थात्हीन परिभाषा है। उस की परिभाषा यह है, 'आय ३ में लिखा है:

"कोई भी नियतकालिक पत्र, यानी पीरियोडिकल, जिस में सार्वजनिक महत्व की खबरें या ऐसी खबरों पर टीका टिप्पणी प्रकाशित हो"।

नतीजा यह हो रहा है कि लगभग ६००० समाचार-पत्रों की सूची बनाई गई है जिन में विज्ञापन आदि निकल रहे हैं। और उन को देख कर कह दिया जाता है कि हमारे यहाँ इतने अखबार निकल रहे हैं। रिपोर्ट में जिन इस तरह के अखबारों का जिक्र किया गया है वह क्या है? सीरियलाइज्ड फिक्शन, भाकॉट रिपोर्ट्स, रेंसिंग कार्ड्स, हाउस मैगजीन्स, न्यूज बुलेटिंस, वेबर रिपोर्ट्स, आदि। दुनिया भर की इस तरह की चीजों का समाचारपत्रों का जो गौरवपूर्ण भासन है, सिंहासन है, उस पर आसीन कर दिया गया है। इस का दोष प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार महोदय पर नहीं है। उन्होंने एक रास्ता निकाला, और उन की एक अलग सूची बना दी। उन की अपनी रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि ऐसी चीजों की एक अलग सूची बनाई गई है। मैं यह चाहता हूँ कि अगर कानून में संशोधन करने की आवश्यकता हो तो उसे किया जाय, उन को न न्यूजप्रिंट का कोटा दिया जाय, न उन को कोई डाक टार की सुविधा मिले, और इस तरह से जो हमारे देश में समाचार-पत्र है वह ऊंचे स्टैंडर्ड पर रहें ताकि उन को समाचार-पत्र कहा जा सके।

इस सम्बन्ध में मैं एक दूसरी बात यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे ऐक्ट में सम्पादकों की परिभाषा जरूर की गई है और हमारे प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार महोदय ने भी इस सम्बन्ध में थोड़ा बहुत काम किया है, लेकिन उन के हाथ पांव बंधे हुए हैं। लेकिन, जैसा श्री भट्टाचार्य जी ने कहा, आज कुछ समाचार-पत्र सम्पादक ऐसे ऊंचे सिंहासन पर प्रतिष्ठित कर दिये गये हैं जिन को कोई पहलू का अनुभव नहीं है। स्वयं "मानन्द बाजार पत्रिका" का एक उदाहरण

[श्री भगत दर्शन]

है जिस के योग्य सम्पादक वहाँ मौजूब हैं । उन्हें बिना नोटिस दिये हटा दिया गया । और उन के स्थान पर ऐसे सम्पादक बिठला दिये गये जिन्होंने शायद एक बाय भी नहीं लिखा था । इसी प्रकार हिन्दी का एक सुप्रसिद्ध दैनिक "भाज" है जिस के सम्पादक पत्रकार कला में ऊँचा स्थान रखते थे । पर अब उस के मालिकों की धोर से जो उन के साहबजादे हैं उन को सम्पादक की जगह पर बिठला दिया गया है । भाज चपरासी की जगह के लिये भी योग्यता की पूछ है, भाप ने क्लर्क की जगह के लिये भी योग्यता रखी है, हर एक पद के लिये योग्यता रखने की प्रवृत्ति है, लेकिन सम्पादक के लिये भाज कोई योग्यता जरूरी नहीं मानूम पड़ती । मेरी सम्मति में उसी को सम्पादक के स्थान पर रखना जाना चाहिये जिस को पत्रकार कला का ज्ञान हो । जिस के पीछे लम्बा अनुभव हो उसे ही समाचार-पत्र के सम्पादक के पद पर प्रतिष्ठित किया जाना चाहिये, इस तरह की कोई व्यवस्था इस कानून में होनी चाहिये ।

मुझे खेद है कि मुझे अपने भादवर्णीय मित्र श्री चपल कान्त भट्टाचार्य से कुछ मतभेद प्रकट करना पड़ रहा है और वह असबारी कागज के कोटे के बारे में है । हमारे श्री १० पी० नायरजी ने भी कहा है । बड़ी अच्छी बात कही गई कि उद्योग व्यापार का जो मंत्रालय है वह हमारे प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार साहब के आंकड़े मांगते हैं कि किस असबारी की कितनी आहूक संख्या है । उनका सर्कुलेशन कितना है उसके आचार पर असबारी कागज का कोटा नियत किया जाता है । मैं अपने स्वयं के अनुभव के आचार पर बतलाना चाहता हूँ कि जो मुकदमाल के असबारी हैं, जिनके के असबारी हैं और दूसरी भावनों के असबारी हैं उनको असबारी कागज प्राप्त करने में बहुत अड़चनें पड़ रही हैं । हमारा जो

उद्योग भवन है उसमें पहुंचने के लिए बहुत उद्योग करना पड़ता है । न्यूजप्रिंट का कोटा प्राप्त करने के लिए इतनी अड़चनें पड़ती हैं कि उनको निराशा हो रही है और उसके कारण बहुत असन्तोष है । इस सम्बन्ध में मैं एक सुयोग्य यह रचना चाहता हूँ कि न्यूजप्रिंट का जो इम्पोर्ट है वह तो जरूर कामर्स एंड इंडस्ट्री मिनिस्ट्री के हाथ हो लेकिन उनका जो वितरण हो, लाइसेंस परमिट्स दिये जायें वह अगर आवश्यक हो तो प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार के वही स्टाफ बढ़ा कर एक दो असिस्टेंट बढ़ा कर उनके द्वारा ही उसका वितरण किया जाये । मेरी समझ में यह बात नहीं आती कि वही पर एक दो असिस्टेंट क्यों नहीं बढ़ा दिये जायें और कामर्स एंड इंडस्ट्री मिनिस्ट्री द्वारा इम्पोर्ट तो हो लेकिन जैसे कि मैंने कहा उसका वितरण प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार के आफिस के द्वारा कराया जाये । मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर समाचार-पत्रों को उनके सर्कुलेशन के हिसाब से न्यूजप्रिंट का कोटा मिले तो उनकी बहुत सी शिकायतें दूर हो जायेगी ।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं एक अन्तिम बात कह कर समाप्त करूंगा । यह बड़ी प्रसन्नता की बात है कि हमारे समाचार-पत्रों के पाठकों की संख्या बढ़ रही है । रिपोर्ट के अनुसार सन् १९५७ में १ करोड़ २९ लाख और ६२ हजार उनकी प्रचार संख्या थी और १९५८ में १ करोड़ ४४ लाख और ३७ हजार हो गई और यह जो ८० प्रतिशत की बढ़ोतरी हुई है यह इस बात का प्रमाण है कि देश के अन्दर जागरूकता और साक्षरता बढ़ रही है और जो समाचार-पत्रों और देश को समझने के प्रति जो रुचि बढ़ रही है उसकी यह प्रतीक है । लेकिन इस सम्बन्ध में मुझे दो बातें कहनी हैं । सन् १९५७ की रिपोर्ट में ५० हजार या ५० हजार से ऊपर जिन पत्रों की आहूक संख्या है उनके अलग अलग आंकड़े दिये गये हैं और दूसरे २० हजार और ५०-

हजार के बीच में प्रकाशकों की सूची दी गई है और हर एक की ग्राहक संख्या दी है लेकिन सन् १९५८ की रिपोर्ट में नाम मात्र ही दिये हैं और उनकी ग्राहक संख्या नहीं दी गई है। कौन किस ओर में है यह तो बतलाया गया है लेकिन ग्राहक संख्या नहीं दी गई है। यह निश्चय करना चाहता हूँ कि सन् १९५७ की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार प्रत्येक प्रकाशक की ग्राहक संख्या जरूर दी जानी चाहिए ताकि मालूम पड़ जाये कि कौन कितने गहरे पानी में है। इसका सिवाय कंट्रोलिंग (विबर-प्राइसी) क्लब में प्रस्तावित की जाती है उनमें सब बांटे दी जाती हैं और मैं चाहूँगा कि उसमें ग्राहक संख्या सम्बन्धी सूचना भी जोड़ दी जाय। ग्राहक संख्या तो प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार के दफ्तर में रहती ही है और ग्राहक संख्या का विवरण भी दिया जा सकता है ताकि हर एक प्रकाशक के बारे में सही सही जानकारी उपलब्ध हो सके। अब उदाहरणस्वरूप यान लीजिए कोई इलाका है जै-न कि पर्वतीय क्षेत्र के बहुत से समाचार-पत्र हैं और वे अपने लिए हजारों की संख्या ब्लेक कंटेनरों में इससे उनके बारे में पूरी पूरी और सही जानकारी मिल सकती है कि वास्तव में उनकी ग्राहक संख्या एक हजार या दो हजार है कि नहीं।

दूसरी बात इस सम्बन्ध में प्रचार संख्या के बारे में मैं केवल यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि सन् १९५७ में हमारे अंगरेजी समाचार-पत्रों की २२.३ प्रतिशत ग्राहक संख्या थी पर सन् १९५८ में २३.४ प्रतिशत हो गई यानी अभी भी अंगरेजी के पाठकों की संख्या बढ़ रही है। मैं इसलिए इस और इशारा करना चाहता हूँ कि जहाँ पर इतने माननीय सदस्य हैं और उनमें इसके लिए सच्ची भावना है कि कितने हमारी भारतीय भाषाओं के समाचारपत्र हैं उनकी प्रचार संख्या बढ़नी चाहिए और उनका स्तर ऊँचा होना चाहिए और उनके पाठकों की संख्या भी बढ़नी चाहिए लेकिन इस रिपोर्ट से यह मालूम

पड़ता है कि अभी भी अंगरेजी के प्रकाशक पढ़ने वालों की संख्या बढ़ी हुई है और वह बढ़ती ही चली जा रही है। मैं माननीय सदस्यों, मंत्री महोदय और प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार महोदय से यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि उन्हें अपनी अगली रिपोर्ट में इस बात पर सुझाव देना चाहिए कि किस तरह से हिन्दी और अन्य भारतीय भाषाओं के समाचार-पत्रों को अधिक लोकप्रिय बना सकते हैं और किस प्रकार से उनका स्तर ऊँचा कर सकते हैं ताकि उनकी ग्राहक संख्या बढ़ सके। इन शब्दों के साथ मैं उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आपको बहुत बधाई देता हूँ कि आपने मुझे अपने कुछ विचार प्रकट करने का अवसर दिया।

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Sir, I congratulate the Registrar on having produced these voluminous reports. It shows the painstaking industry which that gentleman must have displayed. But these reports remind me of a body with no soul. These reports are voluminous without any substance. These reports are ponderous without any meaning.

I look at the reports to understand what the trends of journalism are in my country. I do not want to have a directory which gives unverified facts and figures, a directory which is compiled without any attempt at checking the facts and figures which are given by the newspaper proprietors. I want in this report a mirror of the press; I want to see what kind of tendencies are prevailing in the press, whether they are healthy or unhealthy, what changes are taking place in the organisational set up of these papers, and what kind of efforts are being made to change the press as a very healthy means of disseminating information and news. From that point of view, these reports are utter failures and therefore, so far as I am concerned, they lose much value in my eyes.

[Shri D. C. Sharma.]

For instance, the whole of India is concerned about one unhealthy development in the field of journalism, the monopoly type of journalism; that is, journalism in the hands of persons whose sole motive is the profit motive, in the hands of those persons who want to swell the circulation without giving corresponding benefits to their readers, or to their employees, or to their workers. This is the thing about which the whole of India is concerned. I do not want to name the papers. But I think nothing has been done in that direction. On the other hand, I find that this unhealthy tendency, in spite of these reports and in spite of the office of the Registrar who is a whole-timer, is growing. My hon. friend, Shri Bhakt Darshan, referred to the *Hindusthan Standard*, *Hindusthan Standard* is a paper which is published here and also in Calcutta, and the name is also the same—one is called *Dehis Hindusthan Standard* and the other *Hindusthan Standard*. For the weekly the name is the same and the editorials are almost the same. I submit that this is the kind of thing which the registrar should be able to check. I have no grudge against him. I have pity for that man, because, according to his own admission, the newspaper proprietors do not co-operate with him. The State Governments do co-operate with him to some extent. What kind of registrar have we set up in this country? What kind of powers have we given him? And what kind of work can we expect him to do when the gentleman confesses his own helplessness? I was submitting very respectfully, first of all, about the unhealthy trend of this monopoly journalism. I do not want to call it by any name—capitalist or that kind of thing. Anyhow, it is something which shows a very undesirable tendency in this country.

Secondly, there are newspapers and newspapers. There are newspapers which are genuine newspapers.

There are newspapers which are bogus newspapers. Bogus newspapers are those which are brought out in order to, what shall I say, blackmail people, defame people, to do all kinds of anti-social things. This has been happening and now the registrar is expected to distinguish the sheep from the goats. He cannot find out which is bogus and which is genuine.

I do not know what the value of a report like this is which cannot tell us about the real nature of a newspaper. It is because he depends upon whatever is sent to him by those persons. Therefore it is the business of the Press Registrar to tell us whether the circulation which are given in these papers are genuine or are bogus, whether the newspapers which are published are really newspapers or are only sheets published occasionally to serve certain ends and certain purposes.

The third thing that I want to know about this is this. What about these editors? My hon. friend over there was talking about these editors and Shri Chapalakanta Bhattacharya quoted from the *Hitopadesha* to prove his point. I do not think the *Hitopadesha* should have been brought in to prove a point which is so.....

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: Obvious.

Shri D. C. Sharma: . . . despicable. It is a despicable point because I say that there are no qualifications for the appointment of editors. The editorship has become more or less a kind of a hereditary thing. So, you can appoint anybody as editor. You can appoint your son as an editor. I was told some time back that a miner son was shown as an employee.

An hon. Member: He must be very precocious.

Shri D. C. Sharma: He was not precocious. His father was very precocious.

What I want to submit is that this Report is very good so far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. I think we should have been given full information. We should try to see why we are classifying this paper as A class, why we are classifying this paper as B class and why we are classifying that paper as C class. We should also know what a Class A paper is doing so far as the employees are concerned and so far as other things are concerned and what a Class C paper is doing so far as other things are concerned. All these things should be given to us. What I find in this Report is that it is incomplete. It gives us information which we do not want and it withholds from us information which we, who are the representatives of the people and who have to study all these things, want. So, I submit that the amendment of the Act should be made in such a way, whether it is the Newspapers Act or any other Act—there are so many Acts to which the Registrar has referred in the Preface—that the Registrar is armed with authority and that he is also able to give us up-to-date, authentic information of all kinds relating to the organisation. A newspaper is a very big thing. It concerns the editorial staff. It concerns the managerial staff. It concerns the advertisement staff. It concerns the distribution staff. It concerns almost all the staff. So, we must have information on all these points in this Report.

Shri Goray (Poona): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, as the time is very limited, I would confine my remarks to three or four points. At the same time I would like to submit for your consideration that when we are asked to discuss the Fourth Estate, which is playing such an important role in our country, we should be given more time so that we can discuss this Report or the reports that are going to be submitted in the future in more detail.

As regards this Report, the first thing that we have to bear in mind

is that it is after two years that we have been given this opportunity of discussing these reports in this House. In the first place.....

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Dr. Keskar): That is a question for the Chair to consider.

Shri Goray: I am submitting it to the Chair. I am not submitting it to you.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): Government should also have come forward with a motion for discussion of the Report. That they did not do.

Dr. Keskar: Government has accepted the motion.

Shri Goray: I submit that this Report has come in for a lot of criticism because a volume which appears to be very bulky, running into nearly 600 and odd pages, contains very little information. I would like to suggest Registrar of Newspapers that henceforward a practice should be evolved by which the report will be split up into two parts: in the first part the Registrar should survey the whole field and in the second part the inventory of all the periodicals and newspapers and dailies and weeklies and magazines should be given. Otherwise, what happens is that in these six hundred odd pages the report as such covers only about 75 pages, the rest of the pages being devoted to an inventory. I think that much of the dissatisfaction in the House is due to the fact that this report contains very little of material which really sheds light on what is happening in the newspaper world in this country.

I am also dissatisfied with the report, because I think it does not reflect the present mood of the country. What is it that we are trying to evolve in this country; what is that we are trying to develop? Sir, you will be surprised to know that while, on the one hand, we are trying to implement the Balwantray Mehta-

[Shri Gosay]

Committee Report and trying to upgrade the villages and trying to see that more and more of administrative power is handed over to the villages, in this report we find that the newspapers are almost confined to the State capitals and cities which have a population of more than one lakh. This lacuna was observed by the Press Commission. But we find that since the report of the Press Commission there has been no improvement at all.

I read in the columns of Bhoodan that in some of the villages which Vinobhaji visited he asked a question of some of the villagers whether the Father of the Nation was still living and some of the villagers said, "Yes, he is still living". That is the level of information that we have in this country. If you really want that this country should have more knowledge, more information, you will have to see to it that the newspapers which are confined to the cities and to the major towns go to the villages, to the individual villager and carry information which is so essential to his cottage.

When the Press Commission was considering this aspect they said that they entrusted the work to the National Sample Survey. And the report that the National Sample Survey made was that out of the 875 blocks that they surveyed, 545 blocks had not a single newspaper coming to them. That is the picture of the country when we look at it as a whole.

Here in this report you will find that the Press Registrar has said that 71.6 per cent papers are published in State capitals and towns above one lakh of population. How can we improve upon the situation? I feel that the district papers ought to be encouraged by the Government. The major portion of our finances and advertising go to the English papers and the big language papers which are being published from the capitals and

the major towns. Will it be possible for the Ministry concerned to divert their finances in a more liberal way to the papers which are being published from the districts? That is one of the points that I think the Ministry should ponder over.

In this report we also find that the information that the Press Registrar has been able to collect leaves a lot of lacuna. He has admitted that though repeatedly warned, the newspapers do not supply the necessary information. He has said that definite information regarding the existence or cessation of 185 newspapers is still lacking. Then he has said that annual statements have not been submitted by nearly 30 per cent of the newspapers, 948 newspapers have failed to furnish statements of facts and so on. I suppose this is a very sorry state of affairs, and I would suggest that instead of concentrating all the power in the hands of the Registrar at the Centre, we might delegate this power to be exercised at the State level. Will it not be possible, for instance, to have offices under the control of the respective States at Madras, Bombay, Calcutta and Lucknow, and let those offices collect the information? Let the duty of the Registrar be confined to this alone that he surveys the whole field and draws certain conclusions, directs the policy and submits a report which, as Shri Sharma said, would serve as a mirror of what is happening in the newspaper world. I think he is too much burdened with administrative work. That has been my complaint in respect of many heads of departments.

You create a department, you ask the man at the head to discharge certain duties, and then you throw on him the burden of so much of administrative work that he is up to his neck in that, and therefore, he is not able to do justice to the work that he is entrusted with. Somebody asked: why is it that we should have to go to the Press Registrar if we want

print quota for our papers? I think this is a kind of work that should be done by some other people. Why should he be burdened or saddled with this sort of work? If we take away these minor things or these administrative things from his shoulders, I suppose the Press Registrar will not come in for so much criticism. This is one of the points I wanted to stress.

Then, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that in spite of the recommendations of the Press Commission, nothing has been done so far regarding the price page schedule. I am very sorry to observe that the Minister has repeatedly assured us that some decision is likely to be taken very soon. I do not know what that "very soon" means. I have been in the House for the last 2½ years and every time he says it is coming very soon.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: In philosophy that is called the eternal now.

Shri Goray: I hope now that "very soon" will be really very soon, and this House will know what the ultimate decision in this regard is.

Regarding the points which were made by my hon. friend that the newspapers should be nationalised and that there should be some qualification laid down for the editors, I would say that I most respectfully differ. I do not want the newspapers to be nationalised, nor do I want any qualifications prescribed for the editor. You know that there have been in this country many people who have worked their way up from the lowest rung. Of course, I understand why people are having this feeling. That is because from Mahatma Gandhi we have come to Goenka, and that is why the people feel that there should be some restrictions on those who want to be editors or proprietors of newspapers. But when there is no qualification laid down for a person for being a Member of this Parliament, I do not know why there should be any restric-

tion laid down as to the qualifications of the editor of a paper. The most healthy thing to do will be....

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: Our Constitution definitely lays down qualifications for Members of Parliament and also the disqualifications.

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): It lays down only the disqualifications.

Shri Goray: I am not one of those who will advocate that newspapers should be nationalised. That will be a wrong policy. The right thing for us to do is to exert more public pressure, to see to it that good papers are encouraged, and to see to it that the necessary public opinion is created, which will be able to distinguish between good papers and bad papers.

Shri Joachim Alva (Kanara): I shall not find fault with the registrar of newspapers. He is an esteemed gentleman. After all, somebody else calls the tune. It is the hon. Minister who is responsible for this. I make bold to say that the hon. Minister is shirking the triple problems of the newspaper industry. The first is the newspaper price-page schedule. The second is the P.T.I. news agency. We have not got any news agency worth the name of an independent and free nation of the world. The third is this chain gang. I make bold to say that the chain newspapers are not merely a chain but a chain gang of finance and of monopoly, a monopoly of thought and expression, and that expression is attacking the internal and external policy of the Government of India at present.

I shall start with the first point. Alas! some papers are no more. Nobody is thinking about the papers which gave a fight to the British Government in the Quit-India-campaign or before. Nobody is concerned over them. Nobody remembers them. They are dead and gone. Their editors are not remembered. Their families have not got any sustenance. We do not remember the patriots who have gone

[Shri Joachim Alva]

to the gallows. But not a single biography of the great Bhagat Singh has been written so far. He went to the gallows in the service of the nation. But it was a saddening thing for me to see his brother weeping and saying 'I would like my brother's biography to be written'. I told him, 'Give me a stenographer for six months, and I shall produce the biography. We are forgetting the men who brought us our freedom.

I want the Registrar not only to take note of the existing papers but of the papers which are dead. I want him to make some inquiries of newspapers and editors who are no more, who gave a fight to the British Government in the Quit-India-campaign, and to find out which of those newspapers are existing, and how much money is needed to keep those papers going, whether it be Rs. 5,000 or Rs. 10,000. The chain newspaper men get credit or overdrafts for Rs. 60 lakhs and walk away with that with the present Government of India in office, and their sons also walk away with just Rs. 5 lakhs of fine for foreign exchange violations.

The danger today is not so much of invasion by China, but of invasion of our liberties, of Rs. 50 lakhs fine being reduced to Rs. 5 lakhs. This is something very serious. I want the newspaper registrar to take a note of the newspapers which are no more and help them, and find out whether they need help and if so, how much, so that they may be resurrected and brought into existence once again.

Secondly, there is the case of the Hindi and the regional newspapers. (Interruptions). I am not minimising the danger of China, I shall speak about it tomorrow. I am talking of the internal dangers now.

The Hindi and regional papers are living from hand to mouth. There are Hindi, Maharashtra, Bengali, Urdu and other language papers which have kept the flag flying. I remember when

my car was burnt to ashes in Gwalior, the Oriental Life Insurance Co. told me, 'Send us an advertisement that your paper is burnt'. I sent a small cheque of Rs. 30 to a Hindi paper editor at Gwalior whom I did not even know; he sent back the cheque, saying 'You are a fellow editor, I shall not take even a rupee from you'. And yet, when my paper was about to be closed down, the *Hindu* brought a court decree for a sum of Rs. 400 on an advertisement bill, and the *Times of India* brought the bailiff for a sum of Rs. 600. I am mentioning this to you. Was this sum of Rs. 600 for the *Times of India* and Rs. 400 for the *Hindu* worth the while, when one of the biggest block-making companies, the Express Block Co. owned by a Muslim, to whom I owed Rs. 10,000 never sent me even a lawyer's notice? These are hard facts of journalism. We stood in the forefront in the fight against the British. We were ready to fall in and die or go to the gallows or give our papers. But today, the chain gang has come. Let us read the names of the people. Let us be very blunt.

The President of Pakistan has closed down *The Pakistan Times*; the editor of that paper, Mian Itikaruddin, who is a great patriot is still there. The President of Pakistan has taken over his paper and auctioned it. I think the time will come in India when the chain gangs will be taken over by Government—it may not be today or tomorrow—unless they mend their ways, they will be taken over, and they will be auctioned, and perhaps, Government will have to enter the newspaper industry as a public sector body.

The chain gang has become a definite menace to the readers of Indian newspapers.

16.40 hrs.

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

Now, these people can raise any amount, Rs. 50 lakhs or more. As regards newsprint, they buy newsprint, and they also keep some of

their money in the foreign banks This is how they conduct themselves How can this go on? We want Rs 5, Rs 10, Rs. 15,000 to keep our papers going We have to maintain a hand-to-mouth existence I want that the Government of India should take over the control of newsprint import and export in their hands If the NEPA newsprint is good enough for the small newspapers, it should be good enough for everybody The newspapers must tighten their belts

Then the price-page schedule must come The hon Minister must not kowtow to the newspaper barons The big newspapers have a glut of advertisements Those advertisements must flow into the smaller paper That silver has to go down and flow into the mouths of some other people Unless that happens, how can the poor Hindi and regional language newspapers carry on? Tomorrow is the day of the Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and other regional vernacular papers They must be fed. This Parliament owes a duty to these papers We all know of the editor of *Navkal*, the great Khadilkar I still remember the case which went on in the Bombay High Court The great Bhulabhai Desai defended him Kher took up his case Justice Blackwell blindly sentenced him He had to do two years' hard labour and suffer All because he wrote an editorial saying that the British were responsible for the first communal riots in Bombay These people have forgotten what an existence the *Navkal* has got in Bombay I want the Registrar and the Minister to inquire into the conditions of this newspaper

The Government of India have in their hands a good bag of advertisements I am glad that the Government have under their control so much advertisement Now all the advertising agencies owned by foreign businessmen are saying 'Oh, the Government have taken over advertisements The Government are patronising newspapers'. They forget that foreign advertisers had boycotted all the
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newspapers which stood for the interests of the motherland. I hope now the Government's advertising department is being administered by men of integrity and character It is the duty of the Government to administer it properly so that the regional newspapers, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu and so on, may be fed

The chain gang is a definite menace. We have lost the breed of great editors Great editors are born Some editors have been forced to become the editors in AIR, others have become Press Attaches What are these young men to do? They have to keep their pot boiling like us all.

Let us see how the chain gang operates Read it It is in the record Shri Goenka, Chairman of the Express Newspapers is the largest Then Shri Shanti Prasad Jain, whose brother's daughter is married to the only son of Shri Goenka, he controls some other newspapers Then there is Shri Birla He has got all the things in the world Birla Brothers, Birla are the shareholders of Hindustan Times, Birla Jute Manufacturing Company, Piliu Investment Company, Birla Cotton etc. I wish I had some of these concerns so that I could control six newspapers. Shri Birla is a very estimable gentleman I know all these magnates But I am just mentioning how the papers are controlled

This Parliament owes a duty to the people of India Today newspapers are starting a campaign that we must wage a war I am sure these newspaper proprietors will go into the best protection parlour, war-shelters and perhaps you and I and our children will have to fight and die This is a very important and serious matter

I have seen great newspaper offices from London to Peking All the offices of mighty newspapers of the East and West have been seen by me except in America which I have not yet visited. Some of the biggest newspapers are printed in a poor quality of newsprint

[Shri Joachim Alva]

Here the chain gang buys the newsprint, markets it and keeps the profit somewhere else. We have got besides the *Times of India*, the *Hindustan Times* and the *Indian Express*, the great *Hindu*. If I may say so, the *Hindu* has as wide a circulation as any of the big newspapers. It has been built by men of certain character. But what is the information now? A company has been floated and the Forum of Free Enterprise has bought or will buy fifty lakhs of rupees worth of shares. Now what happens to the political opinion of the paper? Do not be under the impression that the man who puts the money will not call the tune. I had any number of offers when I started my poor journal *Forum*, but I said 'For me, the policy of the paper is more important than all your money in the world'. The policy of the paper is very very important. Do not get away from it. The man who comes with the money always dictates the policy. Are you going to entrust the freedom of this land which our people have won after fighting and dying, into the hands of four or five people in India who will dictate the policy who will say 'no' to the policy of the Prime Minister? The Prime Minister was declared as his 'heir' by Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi never interfered in the foreign policy enunciated by the Prime Minister. He only interfered when Hitler wanted to bomb London and when the Japanese wanted to invade India. Apart from that, Mahatma Gandhi never interfered with the foreign policy enunciated by the Prime Minister. But here four or five people who are combing all the business, one or two of them should be in jail—I am bold enough to say that some of them should be in jail—dictate the policy. The Registrar cannot do anything. He will go to the wall. He is only one of the officials. I want the Minister to take power in his hands. The Minister is a great gentleman. He is an esteemed gentleman and a man of integrity. I want him to have more guts and then only things can be done.

That Pakistani Patriot, Mian Iftikharuddin, who is a gentleman, a great

patriot and a fighter in both India and Pakistan—his whole paper was taken away by one order by the Pakistan President. I have seen him when I met him in London struggling to buy some machinery. We have some other papers—the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Hindusthan Standard*. I admire the late Suresh Babu Mazumdar. He was in jail for ten years and he told me how he ran the *Hindusthan Standard*. Today he is perhaps in difficulties. I do not say a word about the people who are in real difficulties. Here is my friend, Shri Nirmal Bhattachari, one outstanding editor of one of the largest newspapers of India—the *Anand Bazar Patrika*—with a circulation of over a lakh. He was just disposed of. Would not all of you take up this matter much more seriously than the Registrar's report? It is something more. Today the newspapers cannot influence our policy and we shall not allow them to damage and sabotage us. The news agencies are run by first-class young men but they have no future. They are worried about emoluments; they do not get proper salary; they cannot take loan. We cannot blame these young men. They are to carry on because they had to get on just like you and I. Otherwise, they will be fired off. There is another outstanding editor, Chalapathi Rao of the *National Herald*. That paper should come to Delhi. We had our great Syed Abdullah Brelvi who was my companion in jail. He was in jail for three years until his heart collapsed. I had the courage to write to the first Indian Governor General then: "You had not promoted him as a Governor or Ambassador. Now he is beyond your promotion; he has gone to God". These are the people whose names we do not hear, who stitched shirts in the jails for six years until their hearts collapsed. You have forgotten them. The age of great editors has gone. You had that great Englishman, the late Benjamin Guy Hornoman, founder-editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*. Now, the puny editors have come who indulge in praise and attack the Prime Minister's policy, the great policy of our nation. We do not want any

power to have a hold in our land—whether the Russians or the British or the Chinese or Americans. We cannot allow them to tinker with our policy with which we started right from the days of the great patriots whose names you and I do not know. Many of them had gone to the gallows. You have forgotten all of them. It is time that Parliament took hold of the newsprint business and the Government of India must take it over. It should also take over advertising because advertising is in the hands of foreign advertisers who gain control

Shri L. Achaw Singh (Inner Manipur) Sir, we are discussing the 2nd and the 3rd report of the Registrar of Newspapers for India. In his valuable report, the Registrar has submitted valuable information regarding circulation trends of different newspapers and also trends in the common ownership of many newspapers. The report for 1958 says that there has been an overall increase in the circulation of the Indian newspapers and also in the number of chains and groups. The net increase in newspapers is estimated to be 986. It also shows that there has been an improvement in the collection of data of the different newspapers. A significant departure in this report is that a new interpretation has been put upon certain newspapers who do not strictly come under that category. These are the market reports and school magazines which do not, strictly speaking, come under that category. Their number will be about 1,298. Of course, there is an obligation on the part of the publishers of these periodicals to get themselves registered with the Registrar in New Delhi. It has a very great significance because on it depends the privileges and concession enjoyed by several newspapers and also the conditions of employment of the working journalists. Various points have been raised by different hon. Members here and I would like only to deal with the question of circulation. Here, even the great and so-called great newspapers of India are not great, because there is not a single newspaper or chain or

group of newspapers which has a circulation of a million. On the other hand, in the United States, United Kingdom and Japan, several newspapers have a circulation of over a million copies. The largest circulation claimed by the Express newspapers is about 8½ lakhs. These chains and groups of newspapers and these multiple units perhaps control only 66 per cent of the total number of newspapers. They, of course, have captured 37.9 per cent of the whole total circulation of all the newspapers in India. These circulation figures are based on the annual report submitted to the Registrar of Newspapers. Of course, there are certain newspapers whose circulation figures have to be certified by the chartered accountants and auditors. I submit that a better method of certifying the circulation and verifying these figures should be followed, because on that also depends the quantity of newsprint to be supplied to the different newspapers in India.

Due to the shortage of newsprint as well as the exchange difficulties, there is now a control on the newsprint allocation. It has been stated in the report that the allocation depends upon the size, circulation and the regularity of the publication of the respective newspapers and on the recommendation of the Press Registrar, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry allocates the newsprint. The report also claims that this procedure has ensured equitable distribution and that it has also helped in checking the claims for newsprint in excess of the actual needs, and in meeting the genuine needs of all the newspapers adequately. We are not at all satisfied with this position because smaller newspapers are still in a very critical situation. The present control of newsprint is rather meaningless because a lot of newsprint is available in the black market. Even the Nepa paper is sold in the black market and the genuine consumers are put to great hardship.

Several daily newspapers in my territory are printed in half-sheets of

[Shri L. Achaw Singh]

crowm size in the Nepa newsprint. They are allotted only one ton for their annual consumption. This quantity is too meagre and too inadequate, and the scope of expansion of these papers in size has been limited by the non-availability of newsprint. I would urge the Minister to find out where from all this surplus newsprint in the market has come. Certainly, established importers might have released them for profiteering purposes. I submit that Government should consider the case of smaller newspaper in the matter of allocation of newsprint.

The press in India is now going into the hands of the capitalists and big business. In America, the agencies of mass communication are big business and their owners are big businessmen, and the press is a large employer of labour. The press in India is also going under the grip of the Goenkas and the Birlas. The fact is that the Government have pampered these newspapers. They have given certain facilities and these businessmen seized control of newspapers because they thought that through them they could praise—rather, they found them useful to praise—political leaders and win favours. In fact, these papers have had special treatment from the Government and as a result, they have grown extraordinarily prosperous. In the allocation of Government advertisements also, the Government has favoured big business and big papers and the interests of the language papers have suffered thereby. In spite of its avowed policy of freedom of the press, opposition papers which are too critical of the local authorities are often deprived of all sorts of official advertisements. Government advertisements have been withdrawn from those papers. The Government should adopt a very firm policy in order to make the best utilisation of the Indian press as a social instrument.

A feeling of conflict has grown among the newspaper men, especially in the All India Newspaper Conference. There has arisen the question of managerial interference, conflict between the proprietors of the industry and the working journalists. I submit that the Government should adopt a firm policy in this matter. I would like to submit that those papers which have certain arrangements with foreign newspapers and foreign news agencies regarding feature articles and news items should be controlled. I also beg to submit that section 5 of the Act should be amended as early as possible. Because, very recently some foreign propaganda has been made and some foreign material has been circulated in India and though the name of the editor had been printed in the publications, it was not possible to fix responsibility for the consequences of his writing, because the editor happens to be outside. The report, of course, says that the matter is under consideration. It will be proper if we make the amendment as early as possible.

Dr. Keskar: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before saying anything regarding the points raised by hon. Members, I would like to make an observation or two regarding the question of the press in general, as it might help in replying to the points raised.

There have been various suggestions during the course of this discussion, some saying that there is to be a check on newspapers this way or that way, some hon. Members goings even to the extent of saying that we should nationalise newspapers, some saying that the newspaper standards should be raised, that they should be more responsible and patriotic or more amenable to public service, and many other suggestions of the like order. We have to remember the background of the Press and Books Registration Act. Secondly, we have also to remember the background of the legislation that has taken place.

Let me remind my hon. friends, first of all, that according to our Constitution, there is complete freedom of the press in this country; there should be and there is. If we take that into consideration, newspaper is the one industry which necessarily will remain a private industry. There is no getting away from that fact. A matter so vital as the freedom of the press is one in which the Government is extremely reluctant to interfere. It is only after careful consideration of the various factors, when we find that all aspects of public opinion agree that a particular action should be taken or a particular legislation passed, and that action or that legislation does not infringe on the freedom of the Press, that the Government comes forward to take any action. This is, of course, known to hon. Members, but I have to repeat it. So, it is clear that Government cannot contemplate any action which directly or indirectly will be an infringement of the freedom of the Press, which will mean checking the expression of free opinion. While all of us might agree that particular unhealthy trends are there in the Press, it is one thing to say that there are unhealthy trends and it is another thing to suggest that Government should put a check on that. When making such a suggestion, let us also consider whether such a check will not be a check also on the freedom of expression of opinion.

17 hrs.

If in the light of these suggestions, I bring forward some legislation tomorrow, I am sure the hon. Members who have spoken today will be the first to come forward and attack me as somebody who is taking away the freedom of the Press. So, I hope the attitude in the matter is made very clear that they do not want to proceed in the matter of the Press unless something is inevitable and also that something does not infringe the freedom of the Press.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the report of the Press Commission. The Press Commission has referred to a number of matters and if hon. Members read the report carefully, they will find that they have asked Government to legislate only in certain cases. In many other cases, they have asked the industry to note what they are saying and take action themselves, because the Press Commission while realising the necessity of putting a check on the unhealthy trends in the Indian newspaper industry, have been themselves very conscious of the necessity of seeing that the freedom of the Press in the country is not touched.

Pandit J. P. Jyotishi (Sagar): May I know whether Government is not going to put a check on false news with ulterior motives?

Dr. Keskar: That is a specific case referred to by the hon. Member. I am not here to interpret what freedom of the Press means. If that were so, we should have a whole day devoted to that discussion only. I am only stating the broad approach of the Government, as it will help in the discussion and also in the reply that I am proposing to give to the various points raised by hon. Members.

I come to the Registrar and his report. The Press Commission had suggested the appointment of a Registrar who will look, as rightly mentioned by Shri Bhattacharya, to the organisational side of the Press, who will print a report in which he will give all facts and figures connected thereto.

But when trying to define the duties of the Registrar, it is possible to interpret the intention of the Press Commission as broadly or as narrowly as you like. I personally do not agree that it is the work of the Registrar to give and analyse not only the facts and figures regarding the Press, but also other matters pertaining to the organisation of the Press,

[Dr Keskar]

because then the duty thrust upon the Registrar would be so heavy and so difficult that we will have to have a very elaborate office for the Registrar to carry it out. I have had the privilege of having talks with the Chairman of the Press Commission, who unfortunately has passed away. The intention was that the registrar should publish all data and statistics concerning the industry, mind you, data and statistics and not other things, because it is possible in other things to express a bias or to express an opinion. It is not the work of the Registrar to take up such a duty. His duty is to be objective and also impartial. I am really speaking of his basic work, and that is the presentation of data and statistics, which will help any reader to draw whatever conclusions he would like to draw from them.

Shri C K Bhattacharya: Does the Act say that? What is the intention of the Act?

Dr Keskar: The intention of the Act is that he should give data and statistics. Of course, the Act is capable of being interpreted as broadly as hon Members would like to do. But we have to see whether the work can be practicably done. If the hon Members think that the registrar's duty is to write a report about the press in general, I am afraid, that is not really the original intention of the Act. If there is some *bona fide* wrong impression created by the wording of the Act, I think it might be better to change the wording. He should not take up the duty of passing reflections on the press, because, I think, then the registrar will have to quote chapter and verse on different aspects and it might bring him into conflict with various sections of the press. I do not think that that duty should be thrust on the registrar. It is too controversial a thing to do. Let the report speak for itself. It is possible that hon Members might be right when they say that there are

certain data which are not included in the press registrar's report. That can be considered. But let us not try to go beyond and ask the registrar to write about the press in general, a duty which would be too onerous, too difficult and too controversial for him.

For example, Shri Bhattacharya referred to the question of the trend in common ownership of chains of newspapers. I would not agree with him entirely because the trend of common ownership is mentioned in the sense that if you read the report you will see what a large percentage of newspapers are controlled by about half a dozen groups. It is not necessary for the registrar to pass a remark about it. It is quite enough if he puts it so that anybody can say that there is a trend of, what I call, a monopolistic tendency and more and more chains are growing. Naturally, of course, it is not for the registrar to suggest a remedy for such a thing. If the registrar gives an analysis as to what is the ownership pattern of newspapers, I submit that he has done his duty, and it is for hon Members here to come up and suggest "No, we must do something about it, let us have a legislation or something else." I leave it to them. It is for them to put forward suggestions and remedies.

One hon Member said that this is a collection of statistics. Naturally, Sir, the report will have to be a collection of statistics. The names of the papers will have to be there. Let us remember that in this country we have never had a comprehensive register of all newspapers in the country, and the task is Herculean. I request hon Members to remember the difficulty of the task which has been facing the registrar. I agree with hon Members when they say that the registrar has not been able to get every newspaper in the country registered completely and that there are a number of newspapers which have not given all facts and figures regarding this.

The registrar has to function through bodies and through agencies like the State Governments, State registrars, district magistrates and others. Now, it is not easy for him to get all these bodies co-ordinated in giving him relevant information. I think he has tried to do his best very hard, very well and very conscientiously. He has been hammering at these bodies for the last two years or more in order that they should give him the requisite information. Now, it is no doubt true that there are penal provisions in the Act. But we have been reluctant to invoke the penal provisions in the beginning, because we wanted this work to be done effectively and without too much of controversy.

For example for some time there was a large number of mofussil newspapers who probably were not even aware that a Registrar had been appointed. The news percolated to them slowly. They had to be reminded to send details as to what information they had to give and slowly it has come to them. Now an overwhelming majority give information.

I might, however, inform hon Members that now we are going to take up the question of invoking the penal clauses and see that those who for two years or more, have refused to give information will be proceeded against. But I would request hon Members that in such a matter let us not try to be drastic from the very beginning. We thought, let us set the wheels in motion effectively and let us organise the work on a sound basis and then only proceed step by step. Now we will take action against papers which are not following the provisions of the Act thoroughly.

The question of authentication was raised by the hon Mover and a number of other speakers. Allied with authentication is the question of many papers having the same name. I will deal with the question of authentication now. Hon Members might remember that the registration

of a newspaper had been existing even before this Act came into force. It was under the States then. A declaration was made before the District Magistrate and a paper came into being. The same language has been used in the Act as it used to be before for registration of newspapers. The authentication of newspapers by the District Magistrate is a necessary duty. But it has been contended and—there has been a difference of opinion regarding this—a number of papers claim that once they make a declaration they have carried out their duty and it is not necessary for them to wait for the authentication to come. This point has been taken up, as hon Member, Shri Bhattacharya and others know, that a case also is going on regarding this. We have started a legal case also regarding this question. But I do agree that if further clarification and elaboration is done, it is so much to the better. This question is at present very actively under consideration. But it would not be proper to say that the question of authentication being there we should not allow particular names or we should ban particular names. I would remind hon Members that according to the present Act and according to the present position it is entirely within the discretion of the District Magistrate to accept or reject any particular name or the *bona fides* or other rules and regulations of a particular paper. The Registrar's duty is only advisory and that also is not binding on the District Magistrate. If actions take place, particular papers are registered, the Registrar had probably given his advice in a very conscientious manner. But if the District Magistrate does not accept his advice the Registrar cannot do anything about this. This is no doubt a lacuna in the Act. We are looking into the matter and I hope that it will be amended so that there is a kind of uniform policy followed regarding this question and advice given will have to be listened to. But as things stand today the Registrar cannot enforce

[Dr. Keekar]

any advice that he gives The District Magistrate is the person who decides what is right and what is not. So the criticism that was levelled here would not be fair because, as you know, the District Magistrate is a judicial authority and in a number of States the District Magistrate has been separated from the executive office. He is entirely a judicial person and I would not like to impute to judicial personnel any motives when they grant or do not grant a particular authentication to a paper. That would not be, in my opinion, a very fair thing to do here.

The other point which was raised was regarding the similarity of names. Regarding similarity of names, I am afraid there is a wrong impression that is prevailing. The question before the authenticating authority is not to permit a same name or a similar name, but it is always understood if it is not permitted or allowed by the paper which has got that name. Suppose there is a paper by name "X", and that paper says "I have no objection to the other paper having the same name". Then the question does not apply, because the basis of the whole thing is that "I have got a goodwill, I do not want to part with that goodwill to somebody else because my goodwill has been built up during a course of years, and therefore I would not allow you, I would challenge it if anybody wants to take that name". But if I am myself willing to allow that name to be used, if "X" himself allows his name to be used, it will be very difficult for the district magistrate to come in the way. The interdiction, I would request hon. Members to remember, is not absolute. It is only when the other party challenges and says "I will not allow my name to be used" that it comes in. When he does not object the position becomes different.

I do agree that there is an implication about this which is very important and which has to be studied, and which is being studied. It is this,

that if a particular name is allowed to be used in a large number of papers with practically the same directors, then is it not a change? I mean, there might be a legal individual separated from another, but at the same time it is very much the same as a paper published. This implication is important regarding the Working Journalists Act and the Wage Committee's award. This question is being examined at present. But as far as the allowing of the same names or similar names is concerned, the point would not stand if the person concerned has no objection to allowing his name to be used.

Another point which was raised was regarding the allocation of newsprint. Here, at the very outset I would like to make the position clear. It is not the work of the Registrar to allocate newsprint. Newsprint is allocated by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. It is entirely their responsibility. When newsprint shortage became very acute and papers had to be allocated newsprint on the basis of their established circulation and consumption of newsprint, the Ministry concerned was in a difficulty. They wanted some technical and professional help in knowing what is the *bona fide* circulation of newspapers so that they can allocate newsprint. And the work of the Registrar is only certifying the circulation of the paper and the *bona fide* nature of that circulation; it does not go beyond that. The Registrar cannot say "give so much newsprint". The Registrar can only say that the circulation of the paper is so much, that one copy of the paper weighs so much, so, so much circulation will require so much newsprint. The ultimate authority is the Newsprint Controller, or whoever is the person in the Commerce and Industry Ministry. I do not think the Registrar is doing anything wrong in certifying the circulation of newspapers. It is a duty which he has to do, because it is his work. It is his main work.

to know all the facts about newspapers and there cannot be a better authority than him for certifying as to whether the circulation of a particular paper is so much or not.

Here I would certainly disagree with hon. Members who have criticised this and I would say that this has been extremely helpful to the newspapers; and when I say "helpful to newspapers" I do not mean the big newspapers, I mean the small papers. The big papers are in a very comfortable position. Some of them keep stocks. When the shortage of newsprint became acute they had plenty of stock for six months or nine months. It is the smaller papers that became suddenly short of newsprint. I have had talks with dozens and dozens of the smaller and district papers and I am quite convinced in my mind that the Registrar had done a public duty by saying that these small papers should be given so much because their circulation was so much and they deserved to be given newsprint. I know that the district papers would not have got any newsprint had not such arrangements been made. I would request hon. Members to remember that it is only by making such emergency arrangements and by even making use of the STC on a large scale that we have been able to give sufficient quota to the smaller and district newspapers. I do not agree with hon. Members when they say that the district press is being neglected. I know, and I can challenge them, that the district press has collectively expressed itself that for the first time during the last year or so it has been given adequate newsprint. Otherwise they had to go to the blackmarket and get newsprint at double the price or whatever the price at which they could get it. For the first time they have been getting newsprint on a regular basis and not from the black market.

I do agree that there are a number of papers which get newsprint from

the black market. It is not possible for me here to say how the black market is created. Black market can come in many ways. A number of papers you can say are showing more circulation or inflated circulation, but the Registrar cannot be expected to keep a batch of inspectors to go and find out what exactly is the circulation of a newspaper. He has to go by certain standard methods. For example, take the case of papers which are members of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. If the Registrar wants to challenge the certificate issued by the Audit Bureau of Circulation, it is not an easy thing for him to do, because he will have then to make arrangements to prove that that circulation is incorrect. But we have asked him to lay down certain definite principles on which reliable chartered accountants will have to give a certificate regarding the circulation of newspapers. It is possible there also the circulation might not be shown exactly. It is quite possible, and there I might agree with the hon. Members. At the same time, I request them to consider the practical impossibility of the Registrar checking up the circulation of all newspapers in the country. Here and there, there can be spot checking, that is quite possible, but circulation of all the important papers in the country to be checked by the Registrar like a C.I.D. is a very difficult, and in my opinion, an impossible task to undertake. We will have to have another authority if we want to have that work done.

I would therefore request the House not to be led away by the picture that has been painted, for example regarding the question of newsprint, saying there has been misuse of newsprint. There cannot be two contradictory statements. First of all you say we do not allocate newsprint, and then you say there should not be misuse of newsprint. If there is allocation there cannot be misuse of newsprint. When there is no allocation, there can be misuse of newsprint, and it is for that reason that

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we had established this procedure of allocation of newsprint. The Registrar's duty is extremely limited. Not only that, He is doing the job that he should do. I think it was his duty to help the press when it was in a very tight corner. If the Registrar had not come forward giving the certified circulation of papers, I am quite sure conditions would have been chaotic and a large number of papers would not have been able to get newsprint.

I do not want to start here a debate on newsprint because the basic debate can only be carried on by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. They have got all the facts as to why they did not get through the STC, why they got through licenced importers etc. That is something which we do not have, and we cannot decide. It is the Commerce and Industry Ministry alone which can give an answer to that. If the hon. Members are desirous, I think they should ask the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to have a discussion on this subject.

But we have been, I maintain, helpful in giving the right facts regarding this question so that there is equitable distribution of newsprint. There might be hard cases, cases where people did not get. There might be such errors it is possible, when thousands of newspapers are asking for newsprint it is possible some errors might have occurred, but by and large I say the smaller papers were able to get sufficient newsprint to carry on simply because of this arrangement. Otherwise it would not have been possible and I am prepared to give facts and figures, and if any hon. Member wants, he can come and discuss it with me.

Shri Joachim Alva: We do appreciate that Government are feeding the small newspapers. We want them to feed these newspapers a little more, but in the bigger and bigger newspapers, there is a misuse and black marketing of imported news-

print, for which the hon. Minister has not given us a proper remedy.

Dr. Keskar: It is not my duty to look into the question of newsprint as such. As I said, this may be taken up separately. It is possible, as I said, that in giving certain figures of circulation, there may be something wrong. There was mention made, for example, of papers being sold as rubbish or as waste paper. There is such a thing. All these things can be looked into and should be looked into. But the question is whether we can stop newsprint for that purpose, and if so to what extent we shall be able to do it.

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta had something to say about the report itself. He repeated his complaint that the report was not complete. I would say generally regarding this question that there are a number of other data which can come into the report, and we are considering as to how it can be done. When one sees the first report and then sees the second report, one will find that the second report is a more complete report. I can assure the Members that we shall see that more and more data regarding papers are given in the report. But let not my hon. friends ask the registrar to take up the work of gathering in the very first two or three years, everything regarding a newspaper, because he has to gather those facts. And it is not such an easy job, as hon. Members think. The registrar's office will have to be made into a very big office, if we want to get those things from the newspapers. There are certain papers, smaller ones, more especially, who have got no registers. If we want to know of the background or of the back-years, we shall not be able to get anything. And there are certain papers which do not keep statistics regarding certain things. Now, they are being forced to keep them. But that is for the future and not for the past. All such difficulties being there, we should not expect the registrar to carry out

a miracle. But I shall certainly take note of the remarks of hon. Members and see what further data and statistics can be added in order to make the report more complete.

The suggestions regarding improving the standard of newspapers are very good. They are very beneficial, no doubt, but it is not for Government to suggest them. Really, it is for the papers themselves. Shri Goray was quite right in suggesting that the pressure of public opinion and the press in general should take up the work of improving the standard of journalism in the country. Government can certainly help in minor ways, if it is so considered necessary by the public and the press itself. But Government cannot come into the picture. That is the reason why in the beginning I stated that we have to keep the freedom of the press as the most important base of whatever we do.

Of course, I would not like to deal with the question of nationalisation of newspapers. If the newspapers are nationalised, what opinions will they have? One of the basic duties of a newspaper is to express any opinion it likes. Sometimes, that opinion might be unpleasant to me, but that is the job of the newspaper, and that is what is meant by the freedom of the press.

Shri V. P. Nayar had mentioned something about newsprint allocation. The only thing I can say about this, as I have already said, is that I entirely disagree with him regarding the procedure. First of all, as I said, it is not the duty of the newspaper registrar to allocate newsprint. He mentioned one or two specific cases. (An Hon. Member: He is not here now). He had a talk with me before he left. I am prepared to take up any specific case that he brings to my notice and look into it, and see if any injustice has been done or there has been any unfair practice, but if there is anything in the allocation itself, it is not the duty of the registrar

or of this Ministry. It is the Ministry which allocates which has the responsibility. Of course, somebody can say that the newsprint was recommended by the registrar on wrong grounds. Certainly, I am prepared to look into any such instance, if it is brought to my notice, but I cannot agree in a general way, when he makes a bold statement of that kind that newsprint allocation has been done on a wrong basis.

Now, there is the question regarding monopolies. Monopoly tendencies are there; there is no doubt about it. We can see from the Registrar's Report that many newspaper chains are growing up. What we can do against monopolies is to see that the ownership is decentralised. This is a very important question. I had occasion to say when we were discussing the Press Commission's Report that the Commission had expressly asked the industry to look into this thing, not the Government, because they knew that by trying to take control over monopolies or by decentralising them, it should not happen that the Government began to control the Press. That was the reason why the Press Commission was rather reluctant to suggest any governmental action regarding this matter. But I do agree that this is a very important question and should be looked into.

Shri Bhakt Dharshan had mentioned the question of the delay in the Report being submitted. I do agree and plead guilty to the charge of there being a delay. I hope the House will forgive the Registrar and the Ministry because, as I said, so many difficulties cropped up in getting all the information. We will try and see that in the future the Report comes in time.

Regarding the publication of circulation figures, we are studying the question. The only thing is that somebody might say that the circulation figures are all wrong. That being so, we are seeing whether we can

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publish it, and in what way the circulation figures also should be included.

An Hon. Member: It is 5:30

Dr. Keskar: I am concluding.

Shri D C. Sharma mentioned the question of judging between the bogus newspaper and the genuine newspaper. If there is freedom of the Press, it is very difficult for me not to allow even a bogus newspaper, because that itself might come in the way of a paper freely functioning. It is for the public to judge and to deflate the bogus newspaper. Of course, the House and the public can by many ways expose a bogus newspaper and encourage the genuine newspaper. But this duty should not be thrust upon Government or the Registrar of Newspapers.

I agree with Shri Goray when he says that district newspapers should be encouraged. I entirely agree that the district papers should become stronger and stronger. I have no time, otherwise, I would have dealt with this in detail.

Shri Joachim Alva: More and more advertisements should be given to District, regional and language papers.

Dr. Keskar: I have said it many times, and I repeat now, that we are giving gradually more and more advertisements to the small papers and to the language papers. You will be pleased to see that today more than 50 per cent of our display advertisements go to the language papers. This is in terms of value. If we take the column inches, it is 70 per cent.

Regarding classified advertisements, as far as non-UPSC advertisements are concerned, we have already passed more than 50 per cent to them. As far as the UPSC is concerned, I had already occasion to mention in the House that we are entirely under the

guidance of the UPSC. Still English papers are getting more advertisements. But by and large, we are giving more and more to the district and language papers at present.

The question of price-page schedule was mentioned by Shri Goray. No doubt, I plead guilty to the charge that it has been under consideration for a long time. While this was under consideration, the question of the Wage Committee for journalists came before Government and also the public and the decision of the Supreme Court regarding this question was there. We felt that in taking a decision which might be challenged legally at the highest level, we had to take into consideration a number of facts and statistics. We therefore waited for the Report of the Wage Committee. Now that the Committee's Report is there, we are at present actively studying the question. I hope very soon to announce the Government decision regarding this matter.

Shri Goray: Will it be before the end of this year?

Dr. Keskar: I think so.

An Hon. Member. During this session?

Dr. Keskar. I hope, during this session. The Price Page Schedule Act was passed with a certain objective. We have to see whether that objective will be achieved and how it can be achieved. Unless we are convinced of that we will not take any further steps. In the light of the Supreme Court decision and the Wage Committee's award, we are studying them. I will only say at the end generally that the Registrar's has been an unenviable task. He has taken a pioneering work. The hon. Members have not taken note of the tremendous difficulties facing him. He is not in charge of the medium through which he should get information. He has to get it from people who are not under his control. That is a particularly difficult work. But

I am quite sure that the observations of the hon Members will be a good guidance and indication to him as to the direction in which future work should be done

Shri Joachim Alva: About papers which are no more, I want to know whether we will have a record of them or whether something will be done to resurrect them.

Dr. Keskar: That cannot be the work of the Registrar. That is the history of the newspapers in the country. That is a very desirable thing. I do not say it is not desirable but should we burden the Registrar with it? Let him complete the work of the papers that are existing.

Mr Speaker: All that he suggests is this. If any person undertakes it will he be subsidised?
(Interruptions)

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon Minister has raised a very fundamental question—freedom of the Press. Having been in the newspaper for a number of years, I plead that I am no less enthusiastic in the maintenance, in the protection and the preservation of that freedom. But in answer to the question that he has raised, I refer him to the speech by the hon Prime Minister in the forum of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference when he raised the question "Whose freedom"? What was the concept? What were the contents of that particular expression 'Freedom of the Press'? Whose freedom? I wish our Minister will kindly go through that speech. Freedom of the Press means the freedom of the editor to express his views. A newspaper has a prestige in the society, it has an authority and it has a status. It is the editor who is the symbol of that authority, of that status. The difficulties that are now cropping up are due to the fact that assaults are being made on the position of the editor so that the others might partake of them—the authority,

the prestige and the status to serve their own interests.

That is the problem and the question as to how it can be checked was one of the major questions before the Press Commission and the entire effort of the Press Commission, if I may say so, from my point of view was to salvage the position of the editor. This is possible if the efforts at the implementation of the recommendations of the Press Commission are successful. Unless this is done, the efforts are not successful.

The Minister has made another statement which appears astounding. I am astounded that he could have made that statement. He wanted to substitute the law by letters of consent. The proviso to section 6 of the Press and Registration of Books Act makes it mandatory on the magistrates that they shall not grant authentication of titles to anyone when it is found that the same title or similar titles are there for another newspaper published in the same language or in the same State. The hon. Minister now says that one can secure a consent from the existing newspaper and may easily override the provisions of this Act. I wonder how he made that statement. I wonder more whether it could be possible under a system where judicial dispensation exists that the provision of a law should be nullified by someone who can somehow secure a letter of consent from somebody. If this is the intention of the Act it should be made clear in the body of the Act itself, and it should not have been stated here that:

"declaration shall not so authenticate it unless the magistrate is satisfied that the newspaper proposed to be published does not bear a title which is the same as or similar to that of any other newspaper published either in the same language or in the same State"

I wish the hon Minister would note that the word used is "shall" and that

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there is no scope and no chance of substituting the provision of section 6 by a letter of consent which may be secured from anyone of the papers anywhere

Dr. Keskar: It may be submitted to a judicial authority. It is no use discussing it with me

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: No, Sir. I am not discussing it with him. I am only pointing out that this is overriding the provisions of the Act by something else which is not warranted by the Act itself.

I shall make another observation before I conclude. As I have already stated, the cure to all these evils and a cure to the problem that the Registrar himself has raised about the declaration of printer and publisher lies in the adoption of this principle that titles should be made available only to the owners of the concerns. If that is done, as I have shown that it is done in the *Times of London* and the *New York Times*, many of the problems with which the Press Registrar has been troubled in his report, as he states, would be solved, and I hope this will be done.

श्री भक्त वसंत माननीय मंत्री ने यह नहीं बतलाया कि मूल एक्ट में क्या कुछ संशोधन करने का विचार है जैसा कि प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार ने सुझाव भी दिया है और कब वह संशोधनकारी विधेयक प्रस्तुत किया जायेगा ?

Dr. Keskar: I can say that the question of amending the Act and filling up the lacuna is under active consideration. If possible, we might introduce the Bill in this session.

श्री रामकृष्ण गुप्त अध्यक्ष महोदय, जहाँ तक फ्रीडम ऑफ प्रेस का सवाल है मैं उसके बारे में माननीय मंत्री से यह भी रिक्वेस्ट करता कि श्री नरेबुल ब्राह्म विनिस्टर

ने २८ सितम्बर सन् १९५९ को जो चर्चीलड में स्पीच की थी उसको भी वह जरा स्टडी कर ले ताकि यह बात अच्छी तरह से मालूम हो जाय कि फ्रीडम ऑफ प्रेस का मतलब क्या है। मुझे पूरा भरोसा है कि उनकी उस स्पीच को भी अच्छे तरीके से स्टडी किया जायेगा।

दूसरी बात जो कि मैं कहना चाहता हूँ वह यह है कि प्रेस कमिशन ने भी इस बात के लिए सिफारिश की थी कि प्रेस काउंसिल कायम की जाय। मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि माननीय मंत्री उस तर्जवीज पर भी विचार करेंगे। जितने भी प्राप्रेसिव कट्टीज हैं उन तमाम के अन्दर इस किस्म की काउंसिल पाई जाती है और जहाँ ऐक्ट को अनेक करने का सवाल है उस वक्त इन तमाम बातों का ध्यान रक्खा जायगा जिससे कि प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार को और ज्यादा पावर्स दी जाय और जो रिपोर्ट्स के अन्दर कमियाँ रह गई हैं उनका सबसे बड़ा कारण यह है कि रजिस्ट्रार के पास कोई पावर या एफ़ेक्टिव कंट्रोल नहीं था जिससे कि वह उन न्यूजपेपर्स के खिलाफ कोई ऐक्शन ले सकते। मुझे पूरा भरोसा है कि इन तमाम बातों पर जरूर विचार किया जायगा और इस ऐक्ट को इस ढंग से एनेड किया जायगा जिससे कि ग्रायन्दा यह तमाम कमियाँ धबका लैकना दूर हो जाय।

श्री बोक्रीज बाल्वा माननीय मंत्री ने ब्राह्म विनिस्टर साहब की दो स्पीचों को पढ़ा होगा।

Mr. Speaker: I will put the motions to the vote of the House.

The question is

"That this House takes note of the Annual Report of the Registrar of Newspapers for India for the year 1957, laid on the Table of

