

12-12 hrs

COMMITTEE ON THE ABSENCE OF
MEMBERS FROM THE SITTINGS OF
THE HOUSE

TWENTY-FOURTH REPORT

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta (Mahendragarh): I beg to present the Twenty-fourth Report of the Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House.

I also lay on the Table a copy of the statement showing the names of Members who have been continuously absent from the sittings of the House for 15 days or more from the 14th February to 31st March, 1961 during the thirteenth session.

12-12½ hrs.

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

TWELFTH REPORT

Sardar Hukam Singh (Bhatinda): I beg to move:

"That this House agrees with the Twelfth Report of the Committee of Privileges presented to the House on the 28th April, 1961."

There was a resolution adopted in this House on the 20th April that the question of breach of privilege be made over to the Committee of Privileges. The committee met the very same day—on the 20th—and they issued a notice to the editor and to the correspondent that they should appear on the 26th before the committee and they might submit any explanation that they might have to make to the committee. It was also conveyed to them that if they wanted to appear and give some oral explanations, they could do that by appearing at 4 o'clock before the committee on that very date, viz., 26th.

We got an intimation from Shri Karanjia—it was a long letter that has been printed in the report—that he was suffering from a malignant attack

of influenza. He enclosed a medical certificate also from a doctor. It says:

"Certified that Mr. R. K. Karanjia is under my treatment *re*: an acute influenzial bronch attack with very marked constitutional symptoms. Is a little better but has been advised to take rest and not to expose to physical strain for at least a fortn ght."

Shri Karanjia wanted that he might be given six weeks' time to give his explanation. From the long letter that he has sent, it seems that probably he wants to study the authorities and fight out his case. He has, of course, quoted one hon. Member here, Shri Nath Pai, that he had made certain observations that the freedom of the Press is as essential as the prestige of this Parliament and he has just argued on that, saying that unless enough opportunity is given to him in which he could prepare his case, it is not possible to avail of this opportunity that has been given to him. Therefore, he wanted six weeks' time. The committee considered all that and as they wanted that adequate opportunity should be given to him, so that he could say whatever he wanted to, they have agreed and made the recommendation that the House be requested to give that time of six weeks. The committee have asked that they might be allowed to submit their report by the last day of the first week of the next session. This is so far as the case of the editor was concerned.

The local correspondent here, who is assigned to the lobby of Parliament, Shri Raghavan, pleaded that because the editor had taken upon himself the whole responsibility and said that he had edited the despatch that was sent from here, perhaps no responsibility was attached to him and he might be absolved of it, but if the committee thought that still he was responsible, he also might be given six weeks' time. The committee did not agree with that. The committee thought that this time could not be given to Shri Raghavan, who was here every day. He ought to have appeared before the committee