

## LOK SABHA DEBATES

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### LOK SABHA

Wednesday, May 24, 1972/Jyaishta 3,  
1894 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### U P S not bona fide News Agency

\*961 SHRI PILOO MODY Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state

(a) whether the Press Information Bureau wrote to the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs, informing them that since universal Press Service is no longer accredited to Government, it is not a *bona fide* news agency and as such it should be charged at commercial rates and not at Press rates, and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA) (a) and (b) No, Sir The P & T Board were advised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting that the latter were unable to recommend allotment of teleprinter channels to Messrs Universal Press Service No advice was conveyed to the P & T Board regarding the rates to be charged by the Board for the services rendered to U P S

SHRI PILOO MODY There was a contract between the U P S. and the D G., P. & T which specified that they would be permitted to transmit their services at rates which are usually charged to the Press. And

in the middle of this contract, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, all of a sudden, decided to withdraw this accreditation and the information apparently was conveyed to the D G., P & T with the result that commercial rates are being charged to a news service which cannot possibly make both ends meet if they are charged commercial rates What was the reason that impelled the Government to make this switch-over in spite of the fact that the contract had been signed many years ago?

SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA The accreditation to the U P S. was not withdrawn The representatives of the U P S in Delhi wrote to the P I B that he is no longer with the U P S and the U P S themselves wrote to the P I B that the correspondent is not working for them In the meantime, the U P S asked for fresh accreditation to two of its nominees The Central Press Accreditation Committee found that it was not in a position to recommend the accreditation of these two representatives,

SHRI PILOO MODY I asked the reasons thereof

SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA The reason is that the Central Press Accreditation Committee found that this News Agency was not a *bona fide* news agency and I may inform the hon Member that the Central Press Accreditation Committee consists of nominees of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference and the Federation of Indian Working Journalists The Members of this Central Press Accreditation Committee decided not to recommend the accreditation of the two fresh nominees of this News Agency to the Government for accreditation.

SHRI PILOO MODY The Minister has said that the Accreditation Committee arrived at a conclusion that this was not a *bona fide* News Agency. I think that when a serious allegation like that is made against,

a News Agency which has been functioning in something like 11 to 15 different languages and for many many years, some logical reason should be given why a particular news agency is not a *bona fide* news agency. Therefore, I would like to know from the Minister as to when he says that a particular agency is not a *bona fide*, is it necessary on the part of the Government or the Ministry to specify what is it that makes it *mala fide* ?

**SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA** In this particular case, there is a writ petition pending before the High Court of Madras

So, I would not like to refer about this particular case

**MR SPEAKER** What he means is, they have taken a view that they were not *bona fide*. Have they given the reasons ?

**SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA** The news agency concerned has filed a writ petition. The reason is this, the Committee said that news agency is a non-*bona fide* news agency

**SHRI PILOO MODY** If I were to say that the Minister is non-*bona fide* Minister, would that mean, they would stop his accreditation on the Treasury Benches ?

**THE PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY, MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MATI INDIRA GANDHI)** The point is that the Government does not decide which is *bona fide* and which is *mala fide*. This is the point. It is this Committee which decides. They have—as far as I have been able to understand it,—not given any reasons for it. But the Government accept their recommendations.

**SHRI PILOO MODY** Sir, may I be permitted to put a supplementary arising out of this information ? I would like to know this. If this Accreditation Committee were to do an injustice, what is the recourse that is left to the party affected to seek further justice in the matter ?

**SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI** It seems that so far there is no recourse to that.

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAEE** Are we to understand that there is no appeal against the decision of the Accreditation Committee ? Cannot the Government review any decision taken by the Committee ?

**श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी** अभी तक तो ऐसा नहीं है, लेकिन अगर ऐसा कुछ बदलना है तो आप सबकी राय से देख सकते हैं।

**MR SPEAKER**, Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU** This news agency was at one time being accredited by the same set of people. How was it that they were given that at that time and today they have decided to do this otherwise ? And then my second question is this. Is the Government aware of the fact that journalists in this country, particularly in Delhi, feel that if they write anything against the Government, Government will proceed to forfeit their accreditation ?

**SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI** No, not at all, Sir

**MR SPEAKER** Mr Jyotirmoy Bosu, I called you for the next question

**SHRI PILOO MODY** Let them answer the first part of his question, Sir. He has asked a very pertinent question. Once the person was accredited. Suddenly, just because the personnel changes, they decide that this is not accredited.

**SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA** One particular person, Mr Deepak Roy Choudhury was given accreditation by the news agency. Later on, Mr Deepak Roy Choudhury wrote to the P I B that he was no longer with them, that is with the U P S. The U P S themselves wrote to the P I B that Mr Deepak Roy Choudhury was no longer with them. Naturally, Sir, the accreditation lapsed.

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU** The cat is out of the bag !

**SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA** This accreditation is individual and it is on the recommendation of the newspapers and news agencies.

SHRI PILOO MODY A news agency can be de-recognised because they do not want to appoint an individual as a representative in Delhi which will not please them

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU May I put one question, Sir ?

MR SPEAKER No, you may put your next question I have called you for the next question and go on asking supplementaries

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU Thank you in advance, Sir I will just ask one simple question Will the same condition apply to the P T I and U N I if the particular correspondents of P T I and U N I withdraws ? I want ask that question

MR SPLAKER This question does not arise out of that

(Interruption)

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU Be kind to the opposition Sir He is prepared to answer

SHRI PILOO MODY It is not very easy to get your question allotted first of all But when it does come, Sir, we are entitled to ask a question We have not asked something embarrassing. We have asked a simple question Just because a correspondent changes is the news agency not entitled to representation ? It is a very straight and simple question

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU If a correspondent kicks the bucket and dies, that means, the news agency goes out of existence

SHRI PILOO MODY This is precisely what has happened to this news agency because, since one man has resigned, the news agency has to go into liquidation,—only just because of that

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU Do you approve of that idea, Sir ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI We have already answered it

SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA . The rules of accreditation is very clear in the sense

that accreditation is personal and not transferable But, of course, the type of news agencies and newspapers are always taken into consideration In this case after the accreditation had lapsed, when the fresh application came for accreditation, the Committee decided not to recommend to Government two of its other nominees

SHRI PILOO MODY The agency recommended two names Neither of them was found acceptable Does the Accreditation Committee recommend the agencies or the personnel of the Agencies ? It cannot do so It is not appointed for that purpose

MR SPEAKER I have passed on to the next question

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU Before putting my question Sir, I would only say one thing People should realise how controlled is the Press in this country

MR SPEAKER Next question

Big gap between Demand and Supply of Telephones

\*962 SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state

(a) whether a study of the development made in the telecommunications field reveals that inadequate understanding of the Country's requirements and faulty planning have created a big gap between demand and supply of telephones ,

(b) if so, the main findings of the said study , and

(c) the action, if any that has been or is being taken on these findings ,

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI H N BAHUGUNA) . (a) and (b) A statement is placed on the table of the Lok Sabha

(c) The Planning Commission has been allotting larger financial resources for the successive 5 year Plans and actions have already been taken to augment the indigenous production capacity of telecommunication stores and equipment Two high-