

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY: I may be allowed to begin my speech at six O'Clock.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You can begin now and speak for five minutes.

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY: Sir, this is not the first time that this issue has been raised and discussed in this august House. Since three decades this issue has been discussed several times without coming to a finality. Today we are discussing this issue with pain and agony. Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are the two major States using the waters of Cauvery river.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You can continue afterwards.

Shri P.A Sangma to make a statement.

15.23 hrs

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

The Times of India Group of Newspapers

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): Some Hon'ble Members had raised in the House the issue relating to steps being taken by the management of Times of India Group of Newspapers and in particular in respect of publication of Nav Bharat Times. A section of the Press has also reported that M/s Bennet Coleman & Co. of the Times of India Group had decided to close down the News Bureau of Nav Bharat Times and to covert it into a translated version of the Times of India. The report also stated that a number of news persons would be retrenched. Some of the journalist bodies too reportedly have protested against the developments.

2. The management of the Nav Bharat

Times has also following the above, come out with a clarification in the Press that the newspaper reports were "Unfounded". The management have further stated that they have only sought sharing of group editorial resources across the group publications to enhance the value of each publication in the Group while continuing to retain its identity.

3. While the Government would not wish to intervene in the internal matters of newspapers establishments in the interest of freedom of the press; should there be any violation of law, it shall ensure due action as may be specifically called for.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Rosera): You allow us for two minutes. (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the statement made by the hon. Minister is pro-management.

[English]

There has been serious violation of labour law. I can give you an example. Kindly allow us for two minutes. This is one-sided statement. (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

I would like to request you to allow me to speak on this issue too. (*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, just a minute. Whenever a Minister makes a *suo motu* statement, then clarifications are not allowed. This is what we have been following so far.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: The Minister has stated that there has been no violation of labour law. There have been violations of labour laws. (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

Please allow me to speak for a minute.

[Sh. Ram Vilas Paswan]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said just now. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR . DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is allowed only under extraordinary circumstances because many of the hon. Members who had sought clarification earlier were denied such an opportunity.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister, Shri Sangma, whom I regard most has made a statement just now. And I think that this statement is nothing than what we expected. We know it well that the Government will act according to the will of the Management. I would like to know from the hon. Shri Sangma that he is a Minister of Labour and not a Minister of Industry. The Minister of Labour should discharge his duties as a Minister of Labour. He should not play part of the Minister Industry. I would like to know whether it is not a fact that the Times of India Group has stopped publication of Dinman Times, Sarita, Khel Bharti and Parag by now. All there are Hindi magazines. The publication of English magazine Youth Times and Bombay edition of the Evening News of India has been stopped. Due to stoppage of these publications more than 100 journalists and non-journalists...(*Interruptions*) The ruling by the Minister does not count much as against the ruling by the Chair. After ruling by the Chair...(*Interruptions*) I was saying that more than 100 journalists and non-journalists working in it have already been retrenched. For your information I would like to say that the publication of the Illustrated Weekly, Career and Competition, Dharmyug and Femina is likely to be stopped. And again more than 100 journalists and non-journalists are going to be rendered jobless. The Government says that the Labour Law is not being violated. But it is a clear violation of the Labour Law. After all what do you want to say? Is the Report of the Bachhawat Commission being

implemented? Mean to say that they have not been reinstated as contract labourers. I would like to cite an example that even today their services are being utilized as contract labourers. Mr. Dileep Padgaonkar in the editor of the Times of India and he has been made the publisher. Mr. T.N. Nenan is the editor of the Economic Times and he has been made the publisher of the Independent. If all these acts are not violation of the Labour Act, then what they are? The capitalists and Industrialists have money. I also mentioned yesterday that they invest money but the brain is of the journalists. Today the capitalists think that the journalists act according to their will. It is a violent blow on the freedom of the Press. You are saying that the Government will not interfere in it. I would like to say that the Government should interfere in it. It is a matter of the freedom of the Press and a violent blow on its freedom. If the Government does not interfere now, the freedom of the Press in not likely to last in the country. The Press will act according to the will of the capitalists. Then no poor man can raise his voice. Therefore the hon. Minister should amend his statement and state that the Government will interfere according to Labour Law and will see that the Press will not become a puppet in the hands of the capitalists. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. PREM DHUMAL (Hamirpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir the hon. Member who has spoken before me has said in details about this issue. He also mentioned the names of the magazines. I am sorry to say that the facts that should have been given in the statement by the hon. Minister are not there. From the statement of the hon. Minister it appears as if a Managing Director of a Newspaper group was making a statement from there. I would like to remind the Government that some big newspapers have not implemented the report of the Bachhawat Commission. Now big newspapers will publish Hindi translation of the English edition. As a ruling party perhaps it may suit the Government to toe that line. I would like the Government to try to protect the rights of the journalists and wherever law has been violated, it should try to check such violations and the hon. Minister

should not read the statement like a Managing Director.

[*English*]

SHRISRIKANTA JENA (Cuttack): This is really most unfortunate that the Labour Minister instead of making a statement from the Government side, has become the spokesman of the management of the Times of India. The allegation was made yesterday and the entire House asked the Government to enquire into it. Instead of enquiring, the Minister simply quoted the newspaper version of the management. If you carefully read the statement of the Minister, he has categorically stated:

"The management have further stated that they have only sought sharing of group editorial resources across the group publications to enhance the value of each publication."

The allegation was that the Times of India's five columns would be translated into Hindi version of Nav Bharat Times. That is being confirmed by the management and that is now being confirmed by the Minister himself. That is clear violation of the Act itself.

What is this group editorial resource? The editor is an editor of the newspaper. And what is the group editorial resource which will be shared by other newspapers and different newspapers? The Government should not be a party in the mismanagement of the Times of India Group. It should help the working journalists in the Management. I only request the hon. Labour Minister that he must act as Labour Minister and not act as the spokesman of the Times of India Group.

SHRI K.P. REDDAIAH YADAV (Machilipatnam): Already the people of this country are under the impression that out of our pillars of democracy i.e. legislature, executive, judiciary and the press, the first three pillars i.e. legislature, executive and the judiciary, are being managed by the vested interests and multicrorepatris of this

country. The only pillar that is left in this country is the press. That is also being sold away by this Congress Government the vested interests. Therefore, by all means, we have to safeguard the last pillar of democracy...

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Barh): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not a statement by the Government but by Mr. Sameer Jain. It is an attack on Hindi Journalism and gradually there will be attack on all the language papers. Therefore, if the Government does not interfere now, then it will be considered that the Government is against the regional languages and is against the freedom of the Press. We would like the Government to amend it and put pressure on the Management. Otherwise Navbharat Times will become merely a translation of the Times of India.

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now we go to Private Member's Business.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: What is the Government's reaction?...(*Interruptions*) In protest of Government's attitude, we are walking out.

15.34 hrs

Shri Ram Vilas Paswan and some other Hon. Members then left the House

SHRI P.A. SANGMAL: In my statement I have never said, as alleged by the hon. Members, that there has been no violation of labour laws. On the other hand, I have said:

"Should there be any violation of law, it shall ensure due action as may be specifically called for."

[Sh. P.A. Sangma]

So, we will take action as per law. This is an assurance. I do not think that, if they were in my position, they would have given that much of an assurance.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRIRANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): I request that the discussion under Rule 193 be continued after 6 O'clock.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House to continue the discussion under Rule 193 after the Private Members Business?

MANY HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY MINISTER: So, it is agreed that we shall continue the discussion regarding Cauvery Water Dispute after the Private Members Business.

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): Sir, after 6 O'clock or we will discuss it on Monday.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM: Sir, I will prefer that we can continue after 6 O'clock and then we will decide depending on the number of speakers.

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, Monday would be better. (*Interruptions*). We will see what is the attendance at 6 O'clock. If we can continue after 6 O'clock, we will do so. Otherwise, we will continue on Monday. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA (Hassan): Sir, the Minister has said that this subject will be taken up again on Monday. Tomorrow and

day after tomorrow are holidays. The situation in the Karnataka is already so grave and the people are suffering. This is how the Government of India is treating this Cauvery Water Dispute. We have gone to the extent of persuading the hon. Speaker and the ruling party to fix a time for today to discuss this issue. Now, I am sorry to see how the proceedings of the House are going on. This is not the way to treat such a serious issue. This issue is treated with scant respect and I am sorry for the way in which the whole matter is dealt with by the ruling Party. If they are serious, it is their bounded duty to maintain the quorum in the House. It is left to them. I may mention that on several occasions, the House had set up to 2.00 A.M. and if at all they are serious, this should be disposed of.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: We shall try at 6 O'clock. If there is enough attendance, we shall continue. I agree with his sentiments that we have to discuss it in a very serious manner, and we shall be present here at 6 O'clock. We would be very happy to do so. We do not want to shift it to Monday. We want to continue the discussions today itself. (*Interruptions*).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Treasury Benches are also interested to sit after 6 O'clock.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: So, we will continue the discussions after the Private members Business.

15.39 hrs

RESOLUTION RE: STEPS FOR ROOTING OUT CASTE STRUGGLE-CONTD

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we take up further discussion on the Resolution