

section 7 of the Employees Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, a copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following Notifications of the Ministry of Labour:—

(i) G.S.R. No. 477, dated the 22nd May, 1982 publishing the Employees' Family Pension (Second Amendment) Scheme, 1982.

(ii) G.S.R. No. 530, dated the 5th June, 1982, publishing the Employees' Family Pension (Third Amendment) Scheme, 1982. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-4452/82, for (i) and (ii)].

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

**Crisis in Newspaper Industry due to
acute shortage of newsprint**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up the Calling Attention. Shri Vithalbhai Motiram Patel.

SHRI VITHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL (Gujarat): Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Information and Broadcasting to the crisis in the newspaper industry due to the acute shortage of newsprint and the action taken by Government in this regard.

AN. HON. MEMBER: Where is the Minister?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Minister is not here. He will be coming just now.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI (Maharashtra): How do you proceed without the Minister?

कल्पनाथ राय जी आप तों जवाब पढ़िये ।

आपके पास तो जवाब होगा ही ।

SHRI SADASHIV BAGAITKAR (Maharashtra): The Minister of Information and Broadcasting has to be here.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: This is something ridiculous. Give your reaction to the Government.

SHRI PILOO MODY (Gujarat): Scold them.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Madhya Pradesh): You should take serious note of it. This is an insult to the House. The Leader is here.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: What can the leader do? The Leader is not the Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Can he substitute the Information Minister? (Interruptions) Why don't you react to it?

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (बिहार) : आप कुछ

आदेश, कुछ रुलिंग तो दीजिये.. (व्यवधान)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has come.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Did you have a late night yesterday?

श्री शिवचन्द्र झा (बिहार) : यह देर से क्यों

आये है ? ... (व्यवधान)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you are late. The motion has already been called.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI VASANT SATHE): I am sorry, Sir. I apologise for coming late by one minute.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Not before you are scolded by the Deputy Chairman. He is reluctant even to scold you.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I allowed you to give vent to your lungs.

Sir, the Hon. Members have drawn my attention to the "crisis" in the newspaper industry due to the acute shortage of newsprint. The basis on which such apprehensions have been expressed has not been spelt out. I would like to point out that there is no shortage of newsprint in the country and there is, therefore, no question of any crisis arising in the newspaper industry because of the so-called shortage.

The newsprint requirement for the current year (1982-83) has been estimated at 3.60 lakh tonnes of which 1.84 lakh tonnes will be imported and the balance met from indigenous production and release from buffer stocks. The newspapers have already been allocated by the Registrar of Newspapers for India 45 per cent of their entitlement of newsprint for 1981-82. In terms of quantity, it comes to 1.75 lakh tonnes out of which a quantity of 1.35 lakh tonnes is imported newsprint and the balance, indigenous newsprint. As far as the imported newsprint is concerned, the State Trading Corporation has already released a quantity of 1,21,471 tonnes upto the end of July, 1982. The S.T.C. has about 14,000 tonnes of newsprint in its buffer stock and 25,000 tonnes (approx.) is likely to be received during the current month. As regards indigenous newsprint, the three Indian mills which are covered under the Newsprint Control Order have produced on an average, a quantity of 9,200 tonnes per month during April-June, 1982 quarter.

As per their import programme, S.T.C. will import about 30,000 tonnes of newsprint in September and 33,000 tonnes in October, 1982. The imported newsprint and the newsprint to be produced by the three Indian mills is sufficient to meet the current requirements of the newspaper industry.

SHRI VITHTHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL: Mr. Deputy Chairman Sir, whatever Mr. Sathe might say now. The newspaper industry is now getting the newsprint and the buffer stock is also of about 14,000 tonnes which is damaged and it is because of the faulty planning of the Government. At present, Sir, even in Ahmedabad, Kandla, in Cochin, etc. there is no buffer stock and even 100 tonnes the newspaper is not getting. Normally, the newsprint policy is declared in April. But this year—it is August now—the newsprint policy has not been declared by the Minister. Mr. Sathe, will you please

let us know why it has not been declared so far?

Then, Sir, regarding the prices also, the newspaper industry claims that if it is decanalised, they can reduce it by Rs. 1,000 per tonne. It is because of the fact that the STC is importing the newsprint, the prices have increased by about one thousand rupees per tonne. So, why should it not be decanalised and the newspaper industry allowed to import the newsprint? Sir, it was earlier the practice that the Registrar of Newspapers was allotting the quota and they were importing. This time the import was cancelled in last March because there was a huge buffer stock and, because of this, because of the stoppage of the import there is a shortage today. So, Mr. Sathe, will you please let us know one thing? Can you provide newsprint whatever allotment has been made to the industry today? Even about my own paper I can say that it has been allotted all right. But it is not getting it. So, let me know what the actual position is. Can you supply us the actual allotted quantity? Can you supply us according to the allotment made? Allotment alone is not enough. The newspaper industry must get the newsprint also. Therefore, Sir, I want to know two things from Mr. Sathe. There is a shortage of newsprint which he should accept. Then, what about the newsprint policy. I would also like to know whether you would like to decanalise it whether you are prepared to decanalise it or not.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, as far as decanalisation is concerned, we are satisfied that no useful purpose will be served by decanalising and allowing individual owners to import the newsprint. We adopted his policy because the question of foreign exchange was involved and because we knew and felt that the STC imports on a "no-profit, no loss" basis and, bulk purchase, when it is to be made, it is always best to make it through a canalised agency. No individual can make bulk purchases

[Shri Vasant Sathe]

for the whole country. Therefore, we do not agree that there should be decanalisation or that it would be advantageous.

As far as the individual grievance, Sir, is concerned, we have inquired from the STC and also the Registrar of Newspapers and no case has been brought to our notice that a particular newspaper has not been given the entitled quota for the quarter. In fact, earlier Sir, when the STC had a stock of 60,000 tonnes as against one month's buffer, that is about 30,000 tonnes which should have been there, the newspaper industry in the country was refusing to lift from the buffer. And therefore, it is not right to say that. Today, as I said, from the buffer they have given 50,000 tonnes. The newsprint industry varies its picking-up from either the buffer or the imported stock according to its convenience and therefore they will hold back lifting their quota. And this is what creates problems sometimes. But as to the total availability or the question of shortage, I can assure the hon. Member that there is no shortage and if any particular case is brought to our notice about some delay or something I will definitely look into it and see that the problem of that particular newspaper is solved.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bagaitkar.

श्री सदाशिव बागाईकर : श्रीमन्, न्यूज प्रिंट का मामला हमेशा से एक चर्चा और विवाद का मामला बना हुआ है और इसमें खाली सप्लाई की ही बात नहीं है। आज सप्लाई आप के पास काफी है या नहीं है, यह बात नहीं है। इसकी हैंडलिंग जो एस० टी० सी० से होती है यही शिकायत का मूल आधार है और जो खबरें न्यूजप्रिंट शार्टेज की आ रही हैं तो उन के साथ यह खबर भी आयी है कि सरकार सोच रही है कि इंपोर्टेड प्रिंट का जो एलोकेशन था उस में सरकार कटौती कर रही है और इंपोर्ट कम किया जायगा, ऐसी खबरें आ रही हैं। तो सरकार को आश्वासन

देना चाहिए कि किसी भी हालत में न्यूज प्रिंट के इंपोर्ट में कटौती नहीं होगी। बुनियादी तौर पर अगर देखा जाय तो पब्लिक सेक्टर में हिन्दुस्तान पेपर कारपोरेशन का कारखाना है इसके लिये जिस का प्रोडक्शन शुरू होना चाहिए था, लेकिन आज सात साल के बाद भी 155 करोड़ रुपये के प्रोजेक्ट का प्रोडक्शन पूरी तरह से नहीं हो पा रहा है। आखिरकार हम कितने दि। तक विदेशी इंपोर्ट से अपना काम चलाते रहेंगे। यह भी एक नीति का सवाल है और हिन्दुस्तान पेपर कारपोरेशन जैसी संस्था, जो 155 करोड़ की लागत से बनी है उसमें सात साल के बाद भी पूरा प्रोडक्शन न हो तो इसका क्या कारण है। इसको हमें देखना चाहिए। बेसिकली बांस और यूकिलिप्टस के आधार पर यह केरल में बनाया गया था और उम्मीद यह की जाती थी कि केरल में इस में काफी प्रोडक्शन हो पायेगा और वहां की उपज इस प्लांट को पूरी तरह फीड कर पायेगी। जब तक यह नहीं होता तब तक इंपोर्ट्स पर हम निर्भर रहेंगे और इंपोर्ट की बात जब आती है तो एन टी सी० की हैंडलिंग की बात आ जाती है। यह अखबारों की तरफ से चार्ज होता रहा है कि एस टी० सी० के चार्ज ज्यादा रहे हैं और आज तक एस० टी० सी० का जो प्राइसिंग फार्मूला है उस के बारे में अखबार के लोगों को विश्वास में नहीं लिया गया है। यहां तक स्थिति है कि प्रेस कौंसिल और प्रेस कमिशन ने भी यह साफ कहा है कि "दैंट दि रेट्स आफ एस० टी० सी० नीड्स टू बी रिविसेड" और एस टी० सी० किस आधार पर इसकी कीमत तय करती है इस का उन को पता नहीं है। यह आधार तय करने में अखबार के लोग जो न्यूजप्रिंट इस्तेमाल करते हैं उन को क्या आप विश्वास में लेते हैं। इसको जब आप देखेंगे तो आप को पता चलेगा कि प्राइस फार्मूला

को सीक्रेट रखा गया है और इसी से अविश्वास पैदा होता है। कठिनाई के बावजूद अविश्वास भी इस चीज में लाया जा रहा है और यह बात बेदुनियाद नहीं है। एक उदाहरण मैं देना चाहूंगा कि बंगला देश से न्यूज प्रिंट मंगाने की बात थी। 48.8 ग्राम का न्यूज प्रिंट आता है जिस को एस० टी० सी० ने कोट किया था 5075 रुपये प्रति टन और बंगला देश से वह आया था 4950 प्रति टन। एक टन के पीछे 800 रुपया ज्यादा कोट किया गया है एस० टी० सी० की तरफ से। यह क्यों किया गया। अखिरकार देखा जाए तो न्यूज पर, इंडस्ट्री में जो अलोकेशन है वह 72 परसेंट कंजप्शन इम्पोर्टेड न्यूजपेपर कानेशनल प्रेस को किया जा रहा है। मीडियम साइज को 20 परसेंट और स्माल स्केल को 8 परसेंट। यह उसका डिवीजन है। इस डिवीजन को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह जो बंगला देश के इंपोर्ट का उदाहरण दिया है इससे यह बात साबित होती है कि न्यूज प्रिंट हैंडलिंग के लिए कनालाइजेशन किया जाए उसकी बात इस लिए उठाई जा रही है कि एस० टी० सी० उसमें फेयर ट्राइसिंग कर रहा है इस तरह का विश्वास पेपर जगत में नहीं है। तो एस टी० सी० का प्राइस फारमूला आपने सीक्रेट रखा है और प्राइस फारमूला तय करने में जो न्यूजपेपर इंडस्ट्रीज है उनका किसी तरह का रिप्रेजेंटेशन नहीं होता है।

दूसरा सवाल यह है कि यह जो हिन्दुस्तान पेपर प्रोजेक्ट है उसका बाकायदा प्रोडक्शन कब शुरू होगा ताकि देश इसमें आरम्भ निर्भर हो जाए इसके बारे में वह सफाई से कह दें।

तीसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा की मंत्री जी आश्वासन दें कि आगे चलकर एस० टी० सी० का जो प्राइस फारमूला है, उसमें इस तरह की सीक्रेसी नहीं रखी

जाएगी और न्यूजपेपर्स को उसमें रिप्रेजेंटेशन दिया जाएगा। :

आखिरी बात, श्रीमन्, मैं यह कहकर समाप्त करता हूँ कि इसको लेकर कई मामले करप्शन के उभर आये हैं और न्यूजप्रिंट वक्त पर देने में कई जगह करप्शन के चार्जज किये जा रहे हैं। इसलिए मंत्री जी इनका सफाई से जवाब दें।

श्री वसंत साठे : उपसभापति जी, जहाँ तक एस० टी० सी० के चार्जज का सवाल है, मैंने एक सवाल के जवाब में अभी कुछ दिन पहले दूसरे सदन में जो जवाब दिया था वह मैं इस सदन को भी बता देता हूँ।

The price of newsprint is fixed for every quarter. The price of imported newsprint is fixed taking into account the following factors: (1) weighted average cost, (2) bank charges, (3) voyage interest, (4) S.T.C.'s one per cent—one per cent—service charges.

Regarding the buffer stock, in addition to the elements mentioned above, the buffer stock price includes the following elements: (1) Clearing and handling charges, (2) Port charges, (3) Steodoring charges, (4) Custom's duty, (5) Godown insurance, (6) Godown rent, and (7) Godown interest. All these go into determining the price of newsprint imported from other countries. The price which prevails and which is known as New York dollar rate, is the world price which influences or which determines the cost.

As far as S.T.C. is concerned, it buys at that cost at bulk rate and there is no question of S.T.C. trying to do anything because the operations of S.T.C. are not secret. Internal working may be. But the prices are well known and the criteria are well known. We always take the opinion of the Newsprint Advisory Council which meets every six months. It is going to meet in September again. Last time it met, we had taken their

[श्री वसंत साठे]

recommendations and accordingly we decided how much should be the import, how the Pricing should be determined, etc. So, there is no secret. Even as far as import from Bangladesh is concerned, it was done as spot long-term and it was done in consultation with the industry. So, there was no question of any hanky-panky...

श्री विट्ठल भाई मोतीराम पटेल :
ब्रास फिक्सेशन के लिये आप इन्डस्ट्री वालों को साथ में नहीं रखते ।

SHRI VASANT SATHE: What price?

श्री विट्ठल भाई मोतीराम पटेल :
क्या आप इन्डस्ट्री वालों को नहीं रखते हैं ?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: It is consulted. Those who are there in the Newsprint Advisory Committee, they are consulted. Now, Sir, I really do not understand...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Who are the members of the Committee?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: If you want, Sir, I will give you the names of the members of the Newsprint Advisory Committee. They are: Shri Chandrasekara Reddy, Member of Parliament; Shri Gulam Nabi Azad, Member of Parliament; Shri Pratap Bhanu Sharma, another Member of Parliament; Shri J. C. Jain, Sanch Vartaman Press; Shri K. M. Mathew; then Shri Rathi Lal Seth, Janmabhumi—I think that is the newspaper which my friend from behind is representing, I do not know—then, Shri K. S. Deshpande, Marathwada; Shri R. G. Olagamuthu; Shri Prem Chand Verma; Shri T. R. Ramaswami; Shri S. R. Nigam; Shri D. S. Sodhi. Sir, these are the members representing nominee of Indian and Eastern Newspapers Society, nominee of Indian Language Newspapers Association, nominee of All-India Small and Medium Newspapers association, nominee

of Indian Federation of Working Journalists, nominee of National Union of Journalists; nominee of All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference. Sir, such a representative body, how can any allegation be made that they are doing anything against the interest of the industry?

SHRI SADASHIV BAGAITKAR: Who takes the final decision? That is the problem, Sir. They are the advisers. So, who takes the final decision?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: STC. That point he has already replied to. Now, Shri Kulkarni.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: Sir, now it is no use complaining that I signed Calling Attention notice of a different nature. Anyway...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Not of different nature; the same thing. That is always reframed, as you know.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: As you think. That is all right.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can ask the questions.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: But you will not allow me if I go a little bit out of the purview of the Calling Attention motion. Anyhow, I do not want to pick up a quarrel on this issue. What I want to bring to your notice is that I signed a different nature of Calling Attention.

Sir, what I want to know from the hon. Minister is this. My friends have got the clarifications, etc. To that extent I am not involved in the understanding of the newspaper economy and how the newsprint is allotted. I only want to ask him two or three general questions. I want to know from the hon. Minister about the regional papers because we are always concerned with the regional papers. I have heard and I have

also read the speeches of the hon. Minister that the regional papers' quota of allotment is being now increased as against the quota of the papers represented by the big monopolies. I want to know from him whether it is correct. What is the proportion of the regional paper out of the total consumption? How much imported paper do they get? And how much does a large paper get? That is one thing. Along with it, I want to know about the advertisement policy and whether the regional papers are now getting the advertisements in a larger scale from the Government side as you have promised. And now the last point, Sir; I have written a letter to him two days back. I have received a letter from the Bombay journalists; particularly of Samachar Bharati. They say that their Provident Fund amount has not been paid by the Samachar Bharati . . .

श्री उपसभापति : आप इससे बाहर चले गये हैं। यह कहाँ से इसमें आता है।

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: I requested your permission. That is the last question. Now, this is the last question and he may oblige me perhaps. (*Interruptions*).

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That will create a problem.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: The Minister of Labour placed a paper today here and it is confirmed that the Samachar Bharati has not paid Rs. 5 lakhs due in 1978-79. Sir, my friends from Bombay have written to me to please go to the Information Minister and find out what will be their position because provident fund is not paid, neither bonus is paid and nor even the Palekar Award is implemented. Will he please throw some light?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He can reply to you later.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, as you rightly pointed out, howsoever important that question is, if you bring it to my notice, I will definitely

look into it and try to help in whatever manner I can. That is with respect to your last question.

As regards the advertisement policy, I recently said, yes, we do want to help the small and medium newspapers by giving them greater quota of advertisements. As to the regional papers, Sir, we do not have the figures as to what quota the regional papers are taking and what quota the other papers are taking. Such a break up is not there *qua* the regional papers. So, I would not be able to say much on that. If you want in relation to any specific papers, we can get the information and give it to you. But one thing we have done for the regional papers. They normally want newsprint in sheets and they cannot afford to take them in rolls. We have written to the State Governments and many a State Government have come forward to accept that proposal that they can take the quota of the small and medium newspapers of that region, get the rolls, cut them into sheets and make it available to all the regional papers in sheets. This will be a very big facility.

SHRI KHUSHWANT SINGH (Nominated): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I speak as one whose bread and butter is involved in this matter and, if I may say so. I know perhaps a little more than the Minister himself but then he is at the giving end and I am at the receiving end of his policies. That is why it is said, only the toad beneath the harrow knows, exactly where each tooth-point goes. And let me tell you by my experience as an editor that we are not producing enough indigenously and we have to import more than half of what we need. Your indigenous production of Nepa paper of which you get samples every morning is such that you cannot read the print, you cannot see the picture and it is not even worth using as a lavatory paper and even the *raddiwalla* won't take it, because it will not make good cartons.

AN HON. MEMBER: They claim to have improved it.

SHRI KHUSHWANT SINGH: Is there any possibility of your Nepa newsprint improving? Then, you have got two factories in Kerala and Mysore. To the best of my knowledge you are using imported pulp to produce the paper and the opinion of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference is that you are not likely to be able to bring the production up to the level that you are mentioning and maintaining. Then you set up this very complicated business. We have to ask you about our needs. You don't trust us. You think that the figures we give you are simply cooked up. You pass it on to the S.T.C., who then place an order and then we get the paper. As has been reported by the Press Council and by the Second Press Commission there have been frequent breakdowns. At times you have got a glut of paper and at other times scarcity, and hence the black-market in newsprint. Now, the questions are very simple and I put them to you for your consideration. If more confidence were restored between your Ministry and the newspapers and if you stopped suspecting us that we cook up our figures, I think we could get on much better and the problem would be solved. You have to see our genuine needs; not what you think are our needs, and, decide in an arbitrary way that 1979 is the year from which you will find out. And if you reduce the amount of meddling in the newspaper industry, I think you would do much better. I do not think it is for your Ministry to tell us what the proportion of advertisement to the editorial matter should be. It is between me as the Editor and my reader. If he thinks that he likes my paper despite the advertisements I carry on more pages, let him decide. It is not for you to tell us, because advertisement is the spinal cord of the newspaper industry and it has already been held by the Supreme Court that it is both information and news. Then you have this price page schedule,

you have the Newsprint Control Order now which you passed as a fiat that all of us must print the figures of our circulation. If you had discussed it with us, I think we would have been able to persuade you. It is a totally useless order. If you want to know what our circulations are, we are willing to give it voluntarily but when you insist on that being published, then the difficulty arises. We do it on our own if it suits us, because it increases our circulation and that increases our advertisement revenue. But one day we get a small strike or a power breakdown, and our circulation drops. Next day we mention that our circulation has gone down. What impact will it have on our advertisement revenue? These are the simple questions. If you had taken us into confidence, we would have without difficulty, been able to solve it with mutual consent.

Mr. Minister is well aware that the cost of newsprint has gone up as much as to Rs. 150 per tonne in one year. The price of the newsprint has become almost prohibitive, and that is the impact on our prices, the price of paper that we sell, and on the consumer. Our circulation would drop if the price would keep on going up, and the price is going up. Are you considering your using pressure on the colleague sitting next to you to reduce the custom duty on newsprint? It is 15 per cent. Are you considering giving us rebate on the times scarcity, and hence the black-one time 10 per cent? If you had visited a newspaper office, you would see that amount of wastage in the damaged paper coming in transit on the machine and particularly our own product when we run it on the rotary and a large sheet goes absolutely waste. And the compensation is arbitrarily cut down to 5 per cent.

These are some of the points I would like him to answer. And on general principle, why don't you involve the industry at all levels of your decision-making, not just in consulting capacity, but with some kind of a little more authority so

that the newspaper industry could be happy with you as you would be happy with us?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, hon. Member, Shri Khushwant Singh, who is so knowledgeable with the industry, has raised some very important points but on a very large canvas concerning the entire industry. I can tell him that from our side, there is no question of distrust of the industry. That is why, precisely as I read out the names, they are representatives of well-known organisations of the newsprint industry. They are in advisory capacity and consultative capacity. It is as good as saying that you devise a machinery where the ultimate authority is the industry. Where the Government is concerned, where the policy is concerned, where foreign exchange has to be spent, Parliament ultimately has the right and the authority to decide those policies. You can only say that that matter should be handed over to a particular industry to take a final decision on that. Therefore, consultation with trust is the basis and that is how all these hon. Members representing most organisations are there whom we consult. Therefore, the one basic thing is, there is no question of distrust at any level.

Then he also raised the question of advertisements-news ratio. On this, the Press Commission has given its opinion. We are consulting them also. We will not rush to any decision. We are consulting every one concerned. But we can have honest differences of opinion. Ultimately, if what Mr. Khushwant Singh is saying is accepted, that it is between him and his readers, then, the whole newspaper can be pure advertisements and there will hardly be any news. According to him advertisement is also news. *(Interruption)* I am saying this theoretically. Price-page schedule is a different matter. We are talking about advertisement-news ratio in a newspaper. You call it a newspaper and make it a *Ishtahar* paper, advertisement paper. Supposing you do that, Parliament will have to be

asked, 'shall we spend Rs. 140 crores to get newsprint so that the newspaper industry may just print advertisements and make money on it?' If Parliament says 'Yes; do it', we will do it because we are under Parliament's authority. But will it be rational? Then, why call it a newspaper at all? Sir, these are matters on which we are having discussions, even with him, with the industry and with others. I am again open, I have a open mind, to discuss these matters.

Sir, he has raised the question of publishing the figures. Now, Sir, I have had long discussions with the representatives of all organisations. Sometimes, the newspaper industry tells everybody else, including Members of Parliament and the Government, to be honest, upright, truthful, have character and so on. Now, publishing the circulation figures. You have the newsprint order, you know the figure. Why should it be objectionable to just print a line saying 'this is the print order'? What is the secrecy in this? They themselves say, they do not want to hold it. If we want it, they are willing to give it to us every day. If they are willing to give it to us, why should they want to suppress it from the readers? They must be genuine. They say 'this is the largest circulated newspaper in Central India'. If this is the largest circulated in Central India, why don't they give the figures? Why don't they print the figures so that the people can judge whether this is the largest circulated or not? Be honest. Be truthful to the people. Let charity begin at home. It is being said by them. If we do this, the circulation will go down. In fact, some newspapers have started giving like this, newspapers like 'The Tribune', 'The Statesman' etc. and their circulation has not gone down. Actually, in some cases, it has gone up. Therefore, this fear also that the circulation will go down is not well-founded. I have also said in this connection that if, after six months, of your printing every day the print order, only be-

[Shri Vasant Sathe]

cause of this, the circulation goes down, we shall re-examine this. But be truthful, be honest. Sir, in many cases, it has come to our notice. For example, in Simla, you find newspapers, the day's newspapers, available for wrapping apples. If you want apples and also the day's news, you can just buy apples and you will get the day's newspaper also. How does it happen? How does something happen like that? Therefore, newsprint has its value. They sell it as waste. All these things can be checked. There will be a moral check. If you say 'I have printed so much', we are not going to find out every day whether you have done so. This is a moral check. Why does not the industry stand by the morality which it preaches to others? This is what I would like to ask Mr. Khushwant Singh.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, the hon. Minister has said that there is no crisis at all in the newspaper industry. I wish it were so. As one belonging to that industry I am sorry, I have to refute the statement of the hon. Minister. This all started on the 11th March, 1982. The I & B Ministry directed the STC to suspend newsprint sale on high-sea-sale basis with effect from 11th March, 1982. Then the hon. Minister stated that the stocks were piling up. But what is the use? The required sizes are not at all available. So, the industry people, the IENS and others, have made representations to the hon. Minister. They met Mr. Arif Mohd. Khan, Deputy Minister, on June 2; again a detailed representation was given on June 5; and then finally on June 11 it has been decided to review the present position and take remedial measures. I do not know what the remedial measures are. I will be delighted if the hon. Minister explained to us the measures that he has taken since then. Again on June 5 the IENS, the industry people, have made a representation to Mr. Arif stating that the newspapers are just living from hand to mouth.

There is also no security about the newsprint being available in the near future as orders placed and shipment made by overseas suppliers are inadequate. This is the letter written by Mr. Ramesh Chandra, Deputy Press Secretary, IENS, on 5th June, 1982. Sir, if there is no crisis I would like to know why the Minister has not so far announced the newsprint allocation policy for 1982-83. I would like to hear from the hon. Minister, when is he going to announce it?

Secondly, the hon. Minister has stated that indigenous production of newsprint will be to the extent of 1.84 lakhs. Am I right? But, Sir, ~~this is not~~ going to be so.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Not indigenous, imported.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Imported is 3.60 lakh tonnes. That is the total availability. Out of this indigenous will be 1.84 lakhs. That is what you have stated.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Indigenous is expected to be 1.50 lakhs.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Let me check up the figures. These figures are not at all correct. For example, the industry people met the hon. Minister, Mr. Vasant Sathe, on 11th March, 1982. On that day, I think, he made the statement that something like 1.5 lakh tonnes would be available indigenously, but later it is not so. According to the Industry Ministry, I think they expect the production of only one lakh tonnes. That is what the 'Business Standard' Calcutta has written editorially on 8th June. The Industry Ministry expects a production of 1 lakh tonnes of indigenous newsprint. Moreover, a study team was sent to those mills. For example, Kerala mills have yet to commission their chemi-mechanical pulping plant. Then the Mysore paper mill has been facing various problems in regard to pulp, paper and packing units. So, your estimate of 1.5 lakh tonnes of indigenous production of newsprint will never be achieved. That is why I would ask the hon. Minister whether

he will take the realistic situation into account and allocate more foreign newsprint.

The other thing is, it has come in the newspapers like 'the Hindu' that the Government is reportedly considering a cut in imported newsprint allocation from the present 35 per cent to 50 per cent. Is it true? So far no clarification has been given in this respect. In the meanwhile the press has been compelled to take cream wove newsprint. The high speed rotary will not take the cream-wove paper at all. Ink absorption is less and, therefore, wastage is more. They have to pay more price for using this cream wove paper. On the other hand, there is a demand for cream wove paper in some other sector. I would like to ask the Minister whether the Government will reconsider the matter and refrain from forcing the newspaper people to use cream wove paper produced indigenously which other users may find more advantageous to consume. I would like to have a categorical reply from the Minister on this point.

Regarding price fixation, the hon. Minister says that the STC keeps no secret. It is not true. I am one of those who feel that control of foreign trade is a necessary policy instrument. But if that instrument works against the national interest, against the interests of democracy, then the Government should step in and stop it. For example, the STC has yet to announce its price formula. The Minister has read out 7 factors which go into fixation of prices of newsprint. No, that is not so. For example, they charge 1 per cent commission. STC loads its price of newsprint with a certain amount of undisclosed overhead charges. This has been kept a secret. In fact the IENS and ILNA have written several letters asking them to disclose the price formula. Never have these communications to the STC been answered up till this day. I do not know how the price change can come about. In Bangladesh, a newspaper company contract-

ed to buy the same kind of newsprint which was offered to them for Rs. 4,950. The STC offered the same newsprint at the price of about Rs. 5,750. Look at the difference.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That has been replied to.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: He has said there is no such difference. I am pointing out the difference.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has explained the difference.

MR. MURASOLI MARAN: It is sometimes more than Rs. 1000; sometimes Rs. 2000, or Rs. 2500. The industry people alongwith the STC people went in a delegation to purchase newsprint. They were allowed to take part in the discussions about the availability of newsprint. But when the subject came up of fixation of price, the industry people were asked to quit the place.

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN (Tamil Nadu): That is the secret.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That he has replied. He has explained that.

Whether you agree with it or not is a different matter. Please don't repeat those points.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: So it is a secret. I would like to repeat that it has been represented to the Minister that the delegation was hampered by the fact that it was pointed out to them by the STC member that they should not go beyond a general discussion. The industry representatives were sought to be restrained from discussing the quantity, quality and price of newsprint. Why so? If there is nothing hidden, why were the industry people asked to keep quiet or shut their mouths? I would request you to see that the STC does not behave like the Chambal Valley people. They are fleecing the industry. So I would request you to make the STC declare its policy statement and that the price fixation should not be a secret.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Now, as far as the newsprint allocation policy

[Shri Vasant Sathe]

is concerned, I hope to declare it soon after the meeting of the Newsprint Advisory Committee which we will be having in September. We could not do it earlier because we were also waiting for the report of the Press Commission which was due and which was also going to give its views on various matters which had to be examined.

Sir, one thing I would like to clarify once again for the benefit of the hon. Member. I have read out the criteria so clearly which go into fixing the price by the STC...

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: My question is this. The industry representatives were taken abroad, but they were asked to go out or keep quiet regarding price fixation. Why so?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The industry people sit along with me and the STC people are there where freely everything concerned with the newsprint policy is discussed and nobody is asked to keep quiet or not or express his views on any matter. This has never happened.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: I am sorry, it is there in the minutes.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Minutes of what?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: What I have read is there.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: From what? These minutes are from what? From what are you reading?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: These are minutes of the IENS. They all had a discussion with you.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The IENS is represented on the Newsprint Advisory Committee in which all these discussions take place. Their minutes are kept. There has never been any objection from any member. Now, if they make a representation to me, I listen to everything that they say and in that representation if they have said something, that cannot be taken as a truth—that somebody has been stopped. Well, allegations can be

made. So, this is not fair to the STC. As I was saying, Sir, these are the criteria. Now, there can always be a difference. If we go on like this, even within the industry nothing can ever be decided because two persons can differ whether so much price should be there for clearing, whether handling charges should be there or not, whether it more or less, whether port charges are more or less whether stevedoring charges are more or less. I have already said that the representation made against the Government, that they should reduce the 15 per cent customs duty, has been pending with the Finance Ministry and it is for them to decide this matter. All these matters can always have differences. But, therefore, if you say that the STC has not decided the prices in a fair way or there is no formula, this will not be correct.

Sir, about high sea sales, as I myself pointed it out, it is very strange that when there was a high buffer stock and it was offered to the industry, they did not buy from the buffer stock because it was cheaper to buy on the high sea. But, as soon as the high sea sale prices started going up because of international prices, there was a rush on the buffer stock and they were not purchasing from the high sea. Now again they say, we are not getting it. I can assure the industry, you will never have shortage. If there is any lack of production indigenously, as you were pointing out, we will see to it that we make it good by importing newsprint and the newspaper industry will never go without newsprint. So, you can rest assured on that score.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर (उत्तर प्रदेश):
श्रीमन् बहुत सी चीजें आ चुकी हैं, मैं ज्यादा नहीं कहूंगा।

श्री उपसभापति : बहुत धन्यवाद।

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : दो जो इससे सम्बन्धित लोग हैं उन्होंने काफी सवाल किये हैं। लेकिन सारी बहस सुनने के बाद

जो मेरे ऊपर असर हुआ है वह यह है कि सरकार यह कहती है कि कोई कमी नहीं है और इंडस्ट्री कहती है कि कमी है। तो साठे साहव इतना बता दें मोटे तौर से कि आखिर यह विवाद क्यों।

श्री उपसभापति : बताया उन्होंने।

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : नहीं बताया। इन दोनों को सेटिस्फाई कर दीजिए। यह कहते हैं और अब्बार कहते हैं कि कमी नहीं है मंहगाई रही है, लेकिन साठे साहव कहते हैं कि कमी नहीं है और मंहगाई तो जानते हैं कि है। मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या कभी उन्होंने ओवरऑल विचार किया है कि कभी समाचार पत्र 10 पैसे का विकता था और आज 50 पैसे ऊपर उस की कीमत हो रही है।

श्री उपसभापति : बहुत से कारण हैं, यही नहीं है।

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ। मैं सोचता था कि मंत्री जी जवाब देंगे।

श्री उपसभापति : समय कम है।

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या कभी आई० एंड बी० मिनिस्ट्री ने इस पर विचार किया है कि अन्य जो बहुत सी चीजें हैं उन के कारण भी समाचारपत्रों की कीमत बढ़ी है। क्या आप ने दूसरी मिनिस्ट्रीज से इस सम्बन्ध में बात की है। मैं उदाहरण के लिए कह रहा हूँ कि रेलवे द्वारा भिराया बढ़ाने के बाद बजट के बाद कीमतों में और बढ़ोतरी हुई है। इसी तरह फाइनेंस मिनिस्ट्री की बात है। आप ने कहा है कि फाइनेंस मिनिस्ट्री ने 15 परसेंट लेवी बढ़ा दी है। आप ने 750 से 825 रुपये कस्टम बढ़ा दी है। क्या इस पर आप ने वाकई विचार किया है और अगर विचार किया है तो कम से कम अगले बजट से पहले इन मिनिस्ट्रीज से, रेलवे से और फाइनेंस मिनिस्ट्रीज से विचार कर

के कीमतें घटाने का कोई प्रयत्न करेंगे ?

तीसरे सेकिन्ड प्रैसकमिशन ने रिक्मेंड किया है कि जो न्यूजपेपर आर्गनाइजेशन हैं उन को अपनी कोऑपरेटिव बनाने की इजाजत दी जाए न्यूजप्रिंट खरीदने के लिए। क्या आप ने इस पर विचार किया है और यदि विचार किया है तो उस का क्या परिणाम है ? यदि आप ने इस प्रपोजल को रद्द किया है तो क्यों रद्द किया है। इसी प्रकार से प्रेस कांसिल की सब कमेटी ने रिपोर्ट दी है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि प्रेस कांसिल ने जो रिपोर्ट दी है इस सम्बन्ध में वह क्या है ? यदि वह आप के पास नहीं आयी है तो वैसे कह दें और यदि आयी है तो क्या रिपोर्ट है और उस पर आप की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है।

मैं खुशबन्त सिंह जी की और कई बातों से सहमत हूँ, लेकिन इस बात से सहमत नहीं हूँ कि जो सरकुलेशन है वह न छाया जाय। उस का छाया जाना अत्यन्त आवश्यक है। बड़े पेपरों के लिये तो मुश्किल नहीं होगी, उन का सरकुलेशन अगर एक लाख या दो लाख है और वह कुछ घट बढ़ जाय, तो उन को कोई अंतर नहीं पड़ेगा, हो सकता है कि इंडस्ट्री के नाते कुछ फर्क पड़े लेकिन बहुत से मुफ़सिल अब्बार ऐसे निकलते हैं जो न्यूज प्रिंट कोटा लेने के लिये ही छूते हैं और उस को लेकर बैठ जाते हैं। तो बड़े समाचार पत्रों पर तो असर इस का अच्छा या बुरा पड़ रहा है जो वह पड़ रहा है लेकिन क्या जो छोटे समाचार पत्र चिथड़े जैसे छपते हैं, जो न्यूज प्रिंट का कोटा लेकर ही पैसा कमाते हैं और कुछ नहीं करते उन का क्या होगा। यह जो आप ने आदेश दिया है छापने का उसके कारण उन्होंने छापा है और इस से कुछ समाचार बंद हुए या नहीं और बंद नहीं हुए वो

[श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर]

बड़े अखबारों पर कोई असर हुआ है या नहीं हुआ है। लेकिन यह जो बुराई है इस को आप ने कम नहीं किया है। आप ने कह दिया है कि आप एक नयी न्यूज पालिसी लाने वाले हैं लेकिन अभी पिछले साल जो न्यूज प्रिंट है उस पर लेवी लगी है लेकिन वही न्यूज प्रिंट जब रोल बन कर जाता है तो उस पर आप ने एक्स्ट्रा चार्ज और लगा दिये हैं। तो क्या आप उन को कम करेंगे? दो न्यूज एजेंसियों को अपने को बंद करना पड़ा है।

समाचार भारती के बारे में हमारे मित्र कुलवर्णी जी ने पूछा था और आप की इच्छा है कि भारतीय भाषाओं की न्यूज एजेंसियाँ न चले। तो क्या न्यूज एजेंसी को बंद करने की नीति में ही आप विश्वास रखते हैं या उसे आप बढ़ाना चाहते हैं? और रोल पर जो कीमत बढ़ी है उस को क्या आप कम करेंगे, यह मैं जानना चाहता हूँ।

श्री बसन्त साठे : उपसभापति जी दो, तीन सवाल माननीय सदस्य ने उठाये हैं। पहला जो सवाल है सारी नीति के बारे में कि दाम कम हों। एक जमाना था, आप ने कहा कि 10 पैसे का अखबार बिकता था, आज 50 का हो गया, और जाहिर है कि इन्टरनेशनली, सारी दुनिया में यदि दाम बढ़ते जा रहे हैं और जब हमें बाहर से यह मंगाना पड़ता है तो स्वाभाविकतः न्यूज प्रिंट का दाम भी बढ़ेगा। और न्यूज प्रिंट का दाम बढ़ेगा तो अखबार का दाम भी बढ़ेगा और हमने यह देखा कि अखबार का दाम बढ़ने के बाद भी ख़ास कर वह अखबार जो बड़े अखबार कहलाये जाते हैं उन का सर्कुलेशन घटा नहीं है, बढ़ता ही गया। तो इस लिये यह कंकलूजन नहीं

निकाला जा सकता कि दाम बढ़ने से या तो अखबारों को घाटा है या वे बिक नहीं रहे हैं। फिर सवाल यह है कि दूसरे खर्च, रेलवे का खर्च बढ़ रहा है। कस्टम ड्यूटी जो लगायी वह केवल बड़े अखबारों पर 15 टका है। मंजले अखबारों पर 5 टका है और छोटे अखबारों पर कुछ नहीं है। तो इस लिये लोग जब शिकायत करते हैं तो छोटे अखबारों का नाम लेकर करते हैं पर यह भूल जाते हैं कि यह कस्टम ड्यूटी छोटे अखबारों पर नहीं है। उन का उसमें कोई दखल नहीं और बड़े अखबार तो पनप रहे हैं। तो यह नहीं कहा जा सकता कि कस्टम ड्यूटी लेने से उन को घाटा है और नुकसान हो रहा है यह भी नहीं कह सकते। तो इस लिये यह सारा तर्क जो माननीय सदस्यों ने दिया यह तथ्यों के आधार पर सही साबित नहीं होता। और जहां तक बाकी और बातें उन्होंने कहीं न्यूज एजेंसी आदि के बारे में, तो हमारी ऐसी कोई इच्छा नहीं है कि कोई न्यूज एजेंसी बंद हो। वह अपनी ताकत से चले। हम तो उल्टे जितनी मदद कर सकते हैं वह करते हैं और हम ने की है और अगर इस के बावजूद वह नहीं चलती है तो हमारी कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं है।

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : दो मुख्य चीजें रह गयीं। सैंकिड प्रेस कमीशन की जो रेकमेंडेशन है ...

श्री बसन्त साठे : प्रेस कमीशन की रेकमेंडेशन हमारे पास आयी है। और वह विचाराधीन है। प्रेस कौंसिल से अभी कोई रेकमेंडेशन नहीं आयी है, जहां तक मुझे पता है, लेकिन अगर आयी होगी तो हम उस को भी देख लेंगे और उस पर विचार करेंगे।

SHRI K. MOHANAN (Kerala): Sir, the hon. Minister seems to be very complacent and optimistic on the situation. Let it be so. But the reality is quite contrary. In fact, the publishing industry in this country, especially the newspaper industry, is on the verge of a collapse. And this is due to the wrong and unimaginative policies pursued by the Government. I do not think it is accidental. It is the deliberate creation of this Government with political motives. It is quite natural, Sir, because the Government must be having a lot to hide from the public including the cement deal and the latest oil deal of Kuo Oil. That is why the Government is so antagonistic of this industry. It is evident from every step taken by this Government that the Government is very particular to crush this industry. And I would say that the Government has waged a undeclared war against this industry. Sir, in those black days of the Emergency, it was so blatant. But now not only through political means but by legal means like the notorious Bill of Bihar, the Government is intending to curb and crush the freedom of the Press. (*Interruptions*)

The newsprint policy of the Government is capricious. It is something connected with politics. It is something like the population control by destroying the female foetus in the wombs of expectant mothers. As a person who is connected with the responsibility to run a daily newspaper with two simultaneous editions on behalf of my party, I am personally familiar with the difficulties of this industry especially the problems of small and medium newspapers. But the scarcity of the newsprint and the escalation of the price are almost the same for a medium or a small or a big newspaper. There is no difference. The small and medium newspapers are facing the difficulty of the escalation

of the price and the scarcity of newsprint in a big way.

The latest crisis in this industry is the deliberate product of the Government, I charge. The newsprint supply position is erratic because of the failure of the STC in proper purchase and shipment of newsprint in time. In spite of repeated assurances given by this Government, the working of the STC has not at all improved. Last year the international supply position was very easy in the newsprint market, but the STC failed to arrange regular supply and timely supply of imported newsprint against pending orders from various institutions of the newspaper industry. (*Time bell rings*) One minute more.

During the latter part of the year 1981-82, as a result of unimaginative and bad planning of import, the STC accumulated the newsprint stock. That is what has happened. Because of the bad planning by the STC there was the accumulation of newsprint; and immediately the Government found out the way. How? The Government directed the STC to suspend the import of newsprint with effect from March 11, 1982. That is what has happened. The STC completely suspended it. The Government directed that to a certain extent, that is, 30,000 tonnes, must be there as a buffer stock. But the STC suspended the import immediately, all of a sudden, and, that is the main reason for this present crisis. The newsprint consumption for the year 1981-82 was estimated to be 3.5 lakh or 3.6 lakh tonnes—I am not very sure—as against this 1.5 lakh tonnes will be made available from the indigenous source. What happened, Sir? There are three public owned companies. One is the NEPA Mills. I do not want to say anything about the NEPA Mills. After 30 years of its inception, they have not been able to improve the quality of the work-

[Shri K. Mohanan]

ing of this company. I am sorry to say that. The expected supply from NEPA was 60,000 tonnes; from Kerala 40,000 tonnes; and from Mysore 50,000 tonnes. But what happened? In the first quarter of this year, only 13,000 tonnes were produced from these two public sector units, one from Kerala and the other from Mysore. It was not up to the expected target. The newspaper organisation and the representatives of the IENS and the Newsprint Advisory Committee cautioned the Government against overestimating the availability of indigenous production, but the Government never took that into consideration.

Another thing is the escalation of the price. Every quarter the STC is increasing the price by Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 per tonne, unilaterally, without any explanation. And they are not even prepared to give a detailed break-up of the price. Sir, this is very bad. It is my earnest request to the Government that it should take particular care about the STC's dealings. At least you put a person there who is at least familiar about newsprint or newspaper. Thank you.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, I am really sorry that some people are always used to make exaggerated and wild allegations. I do not know whether it is the policy of their party, as the hon. Member was saying that according to his party's policy, he was making the statement. Sir, it is surprising that allegations made, of suppressing the newspaper industry, of the newsprint policy, connecting from Bihar to....

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : यह तो बिहार का ब्लैक बिल है। इसके मुतालिक आप क्या करेंगे।

(व्यवधान)

श्री वसन्त साठे : अंग्रेजी में बोल रहा हूँ, समझते तो हो। हिन्दी में भी बोल देता हूँ। आज का जो न्यूज प्रिन्ट है इसका इससे क्या ताल्लुक है।
(व्यवधान)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Don't reply to him. Please go on.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, from cement to population control, if everything is to be brought under the newsprint policy, then I am really surprised and I cannot meet such arguments. If this is the policy of the party that on any subject that may come up in the House, you should always bring in everything that you want to make wild allegations about again connected from cement and the Bihar Bill to population control, then I really cannot reply. (Interruptions) I do not accept any allegations. We have examined the STC's working. It is done in consultation with the industry. There is nothing wrong in their working. They are working on a no-profit-no-loss basis, in the national interest. Therefore, Sir, all these allegations are baseless, unfounded and wild to the extreme. We do not accept them.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Bihar): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I have listened to the discussion so far with much interest and attention. It has been alleged that there is a periodical glut and a periodical shortage. I think there is a simultaneous glut and shortage in the newsprint market. I think the glut relates to the newsprint produced within the country and the shortage relates to the newsprint which is imported. I think that perhaps this is an explanation which the Minister might like to consider.

Sir, I would like the hon. Minister to let us know whether he is aware of the fact that there is blackmarketing in newsprint and, if so, what are the reasons thereof.

He has shown much concern in his various interventions for the small papers. Indeed I am a votary of the small. Small is beautiful. And yet, I have a sneaking suspicion that behind this concern is lurking a political motive because there is much to relate the incidence of blackmarketing to the phenomenon of these so-called small newspapers. I think the the Minister would do well to look into this aspect and investigate the matter more fully.

I do not know whether there is a seasonal fluctuation in the demand of newsprint. But I suppose it averages out over the whole year. The total requirement has been estimated to be 3.6 lakhs out of which 1.84 has to be imported. That leaves a margin of 1.76; if I subtract 1.84 from 3.6, it leaves me with 1.76 lakhs to be met out of local production. Now, in the same statement I am surprised to find at the end of para 2 or somewhere in the middle that the allocation for a quarter was 1.75 lakh tonnes out of which 1.35 lakh tonnes is imported newsprint. Now, this pattern of allocation, I do not understand. If on an average roughly half the demand is to be met by local production and half by import, then, how come that in one quarterly allocation you are providing roughly, let us say, 75 per cent or 80 per cent imported component, and nearly 20 per cent locally manufactured component? I would like the honourable Minister to explain this discrepancy.

I suppose every prudent businessman looks after his inventory very carefully. It should not be very big, it should not be very small. It should be tailored just adequately to meet the requirements of the market and the requirements of the customers. I would like the honourable Minister to tell us what the size of the inventory is, the size of the buffer stock that the STC is expected to maintain or traditionally main-

tains throughout the year. That is what I want to know. This will obviously be related to the time-lag between the placement of a firm order with a foreign supplier and the landing of the consignment in one of the ports of India. So I would like the honourable Minister to tell us what the STC experience is in regard to the time-lag between the placement of a firm order for foreign newsprint and its landing at one of the ports in India, because this is related to the size of the inventory. You cannot just wish in at a moment's notice any quantity of newsprint that you want.

Now, coming to the production aspect, the honourable Minister has left 1.74 lakh tonnes to be met out of local production. All right, that makes an average of roughly 14,600 tonnes to be made monthly out of the local production. Here I find in the same statement at the end of paragraph 2 that "as regards indigenous newsprint the three Indian mills which are covered under the News-Print Control Order, have produced on an average, a quantity of 9,200 tonnes per month during April-June 1982 quarter", which is exactly what my honourable friend, Mr. Maran, said, because 9×12 makes 108, roughly, the expected production of the indigenous sector is only about 1 lakh tonnes. The Minister is obviously imprudent, if I may say so, and pardon my saying so, if he thinks that local production can meet roughly double that quantity, nearly 2.1 lakhs or 1.76 lakhs, from local production, I think he is going to land himself into a soup. I would like to know from him: What is the average production of newsprint within the country—over the last three years, on an average, what is the actual quantity produced? I am asking for the average of the last three years, because that can be a reasonable basis for any future estimate.

[Shri Syed Shahabuddin]

Lastly, I come to the question of price differential. Obviously, their prices of imported variety and the locally manufactured variety will be varying. I imagine that the price of the imported variety will also vary from consignment to consignment. Obviously, you cannot have future trading for an entire year and STC cannot bind the international market; it is to small a buyer in the total international picture. Is there any system of equalisation of the prices of the various consignments of imported newsprint and, also, Sir, is there any system of equalisation of price between the imported newsprint and the indigenously produced newsprint?

And, Sir, this finally brings me to the question of the print order where I do agree with my colleague, Shri Khushwant Singh and certainly disagree with my other colleague, Mr. Mathur. I think the order asking them to publish the print order everyday at the mast of the newspaper, I think, it is really an instrument of political influence and it is in that context that we have opposed it. I would like to know from the honourable Minister as to how many papers in the whole country, where we have nearly 1,200 newspapers, have complied with his order so far.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, the last question I have already replied to and I need not go into all those things now. Then, Sir, as far as the question of the honourable Member's apprehension is concerned—he was trying to show the gap between the import and the indigenous availability and he thought that the figure, according to his calculation is 1.76 and we have given only 1.15—I would say that that 26,000 is from the buffer stock.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, I think it is misleading. At

the end of the year also you are supposed to keep the buffer stock.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Yes, that is what I am saying. Buffer stock, Sir, is expected to be kept at one month's allocation, that is, 30,000 tonnes.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: So, you minus 26,000...

SHRI VASANT SATHE: And we had 64,000 tonnes.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: You minus 26,000 and add 30,000.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: No; no question of minus. From 64,000 tonnes of buffer stock, we have taken into account 26,000 tonnes of availability and yet kept 30,000 tonnes as the local buffer stock which goes by rotation. Therefore, I am saying that ultimately the availability would not be short of 3.60 lakh tonnes. That is the question and I am not going into the other things.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Was it correct of the STC to build up a buffer stock of more than two months' requirements? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I have answered that question and I have said that the newspaper industry did not lift the stocks from the buffer. We cannot constantly do it. It requires at least three months' advance order to be placed on the foreign organisation which supplies it. The ship has already come on our previous order. But you do not lift from the buffer. So, what will happen? That additional thing will come and the total buffer will increase till it is again lifted. Now they have lifted and, as I said, there was a rush and it has come down to 14,000 tonnes. But we have decided that the required quantity of 30,000 tonnes of buffer will always be maintained. As to the estimated indigenous production, I again assure him that it is only this year

that two mills have gone into production Kerala and Mysore. Naturally, as the honourable Members know, when an industry starts producing, in the very first few months it does not reach its capacity production. So, we are ascertaining from the industry who have told us that they would be able to reach the required target. But I have assured the House and the industry that if there is any shortfall from indigenous production, we will make it good by import, with imported stock. Then, Sir, he was talking of my imprudence. I do not understand how really I was imprudent according to you, Mr. Shahabuddin, when I was giving myself the figures and I have never said that the estimated requirement will be met by indigenous production. On the contrary, I thought I was prudent enough—I think you have not heard me enough; I am sorry—to inform you that if there is any failure in the indigenous production, we will make it good from the imported stocks. Therefore, Sir, I think I have met all the points, I have made all the points clear.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:
Any other point has been left out?

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN:
What about the system of equalisation of prices?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:
Yes, Mr. Kalyanasundaram.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM (Tamil Nadu): Sir, the previous speaker has brought to the notice of the House the steep rise in prices of the newsprint and the consequent hardships experienced by the newspaper owners. Sir, I speak on behalf of readers like you and me who are put to difficulty because of rise in prices of newsprint. It is the common people who have to bear the burden because of this heavy rise. What steps are the Government taking to give relief to the readers and

also to small and medium newspapers? Some people were alleging that the Government is trying to suppress the Press. But my impression is that the Government and the big Press are colluding with each other and they are making huge profits and they are earning. Even the sale of second-hand paper is so profitable that big newspapers show double accounts. Why should they hesitate in printing the actual number they print daily? What is the secret? They preach honesty and integrity to others. What about them? The Government is also helping them. They do not help small newspapers and medium newspapers. They are making huge profit. When the international market is falling, how is it that in our country the newspaper prices are going up? Now, I come to my points. What action does the Government propose to take to bring self-reliance in newsprint? He only says that the shortfall may be made up; there should be no import and we should rely on our production. What steps are they going to take in that direction, and to protect the small and medium newspapers from the hardships due to rise in prices and also due to the difficulties in availability? I am the editor of so many small newspapers connected with trade unions and my political party finds it difficult to get newsprint. The allotment is so stingy. In our case we have to purchase from the market. I can get any quantity from the market if I pay Rs. 20 per ream. So there is black marketing also in that. What action is the Government going to take to safeguard the interests of small and medium newspapers and the readers? Prices are being raised like anything.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:
That's all. You have said that already.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Are the thinking of bringing down the prices?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:
Minister, please.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, as far as the question of prices of newspapers is concerned, if the cost of newsprint keeps on going up internationally, we cannot help it. Sir, whenever it goes down, simultaneously—because the STC purchases and it has no profit motive in it—simultaneously it reduces the prices. For example, Sir, the price of standard newsprint of 48.8 GSM which for April-June, 1982 was Rs. 6120 and it came down internationally, the STC simultaneously reduced it to Rs. 6000 for the quarter July-September. But we cannot reduce it more than it had gone down there. This is one reason. Sir, you are right. As far as the big newspapers are concerned, you have said that 70 per cent of the quota of imported newsprint is consumed by big newspapers. Our policy has been to help the small and medium to get all the newsprint that they want. Sir, I do assure about it. No case has come to me. If the hon. Member has any case, he can come to us. No one who wants newsprint will go without newsprint as far as small and medium newspapers are concerned. That is our assurance to them. That we will do. As I said, we introduced this policy and requested the State Governments to go them in sheets. It is true that the small newspapers cannot afford to take newsprint in rolls. That is why this thing was introduced. The State Governments have their machinery and they can cooperate and get the quota. We are willing to give to the State Governments, through whatever Department they may desire to handle it, the quota required by the small and medium newspapers of the State. They can cut them in their printing units and give them in the form of sheets without charging any extra profit or charges.

As far as advertisements are concerned, formerly 60 per cent

of the total quantum of Government advertisement went to the big newspapers. As soon as we took over, we reduced it to 50 per cent as a first step. Now, we have decided to reduce it further to 40 per cent for the big newspapers and 60 per cent for the small newspapers. You will agree that we cannot change it completely overnight. I can assure you that it is the policy of the Government to help the small and medium newspapers, particularly, by way of advertisements. So, Sir we are trying to help the small and medium newspapers in every way.

We cannot help the prices. We want the indigenous industry to produce more. What happened in Kerala? The unit could not go into production for four years on account of labour trouble. NEPA suffered because of power shortage. When we talk of indigenous industry, it has to be assisted to produce more. We want the indigenous industry to produce the newsprint and to supply the newsprint.

SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA (Himachal Pradesh): I have to make only one point. The newsprint is being supplied to the small newspaper industry. I would like to draw his attention to the fact that the textbook publishers are being supplied the newsprint at the much higher price with the result that the prices of textbooks and general books have shot up. It is not in consonance with the policy which the Government has avowed to have. I mean the policy of literacy drive. The Minister will kindly pay attention to the fact that the newsprint has to be made available to them at the same rate at which it is supplied to the newspaper industry.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: In fact, I had myself said that if the textbook publishers and other book publishers of well-known books in various languages want newsprint,

we would try to see that it is made available to them. I am told that at present no newsprint is given to textbook publishers. They take the paper from the market.

SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA: This black-market is going on. They should also be supplied newsprint at the same price.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: If they ask for newsprint, I can assure the hon. Member that we would take it into consideration and supply the newsprint to textbook publishers.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:
We adjourn for lunch and meet at 2.30 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at thirty minutes past one of the clock.

The House re-assembled after lunch at thirty-three minutes past two of the clock, **Mr. Deputy Chairman** in the Chair.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Hijacking of Indian Airlines plane on 4th August, 1982.

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): Sir, Indian Airlines' aircraft Boeing 737 operating the scheduled flight IC-423 on the Delhi-Amritsar-Srinagar route with 122 passengers, 4 children, two infants, one super-numerary engineer and six crew members took off from Palam Airport at 1155 hrs. and as the aircraft was approaching Amritsar, it was hijacked. The aircraft also suffered damage due to a bird-hit on its approach towards the Amritsar airport. The hijacker forced the pilot to proceed to Lahore under threat of blowing up the aircraft with some material wrapped up in hand claiming it to be an explosive. The pilot could not land

at Lahore as the Air Traffic Control at Lahore declined permission to the aircraft to land and to make sure that the aircraft did not land, placed obstructions on the runway. The Boeing aircraft flew back towards Amritsar and the hijacker was persuaded by the crew to let the aircraft land at Amritsar. The pilot succeeded in safely landing at 1337 hours at Amritsar.

The hijacker wanted that **Shri H. S. Longowal** and any representative of **Sant Bhindrawale** to come to the aircraft and talk to him.

With the tactful handling of the situation by the pilot and the crew the women and children were allowed to disembark first and then the remaining passengers were also allowed to come out. Subsequently the hijacker's surrender was brought about at about 4 p.m.

A relief Boeing 737 aircraft with **Chairman and Managing Director, Indian Airlines**, was sent to Amritsar. Arrangements were made to send the Srinagar-bound passengers to Srinagar by I.A. aircraft at about 5 p.m. The hijacker has been identified as one **Gurbax Singh** aged about 45 years who boarded the plane at Delhi for Amritsar. The object used by him to threaten the pilot has been identified as a plastic ball wrapped in a yellow cloth. The hijacker claims to belong to a village near **Kurukshetra**. He was wearing a blue turban, white pyjama and kurta.

The demands of the hijacker were:—

(i) Amritsar should be declared a Holy City.

(ii) Punjab Govt. should tender apology for stopping people from reaching Amritsar on 25th July, 1982.

(iii) Persons who burnt holy books and buses at **Chandam Kalan** should be punished and action taken against them.