

[श्री शिव चन्द्र झा]

"The misadventure took place this afternoon when Mr. Singh and members of the staff had locked the premises and gone out for lunch."

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, उस में क्या बर्बादी हुई उस के बारे में यह अखबार कहता है -

"...the office equipment had been thrown out so recklessly that the damage was estimated at around Rs. 1.5 lakhs and, what was worse, hard cash of the order of Rs. 3.25 lakhs had been allegedly "looted" from the Godrej almirah after forcing open the lock."

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI A. G. KULKARNI): You have to conclude now.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय दय, यह प्लैन्ड गुन्डाइज्म है। वह लेट लूज हो गये हैं आन दि आर्डर आफ दि चीफ मिनिस्टर आफ बिहार। उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय बिहार में जगन्नाथ मिश्र जी मुख्य मंत्री नियुक्त किये गये हैं, कोई नादिरशाह नहीं नियुक्त किया गया है इस लिये मेरा सदन से कहना है कि इस घटना की पूरी जांच होनी चाहिए और 5 लाख रुपया जो वे लोग लूट कर ले गये हैं मुख्य मंत्री के आदेश पर उसे वापस कराया जाना चाहिए। यह नादिरशाही काम है। क्या इसी लिये वे मुख्य मंत्री बने हैं। (Interruptions) उन को वहाँ से हटाया जाये और वहाँ हमारा मुख्य मंत्री लाया जाये।

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Newsprint Allocation Policy of the Government of India for 1980-81

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, ...the House would recall that in his address to Parliament in January this year, the President had referred to the Government's commitment to provide all possible encour-

agement for the development of small and medium newspapers including those in regional languages. Ever since assuming office, our Government has been engaged in the consideration of a variety of policy initiatives and programmes to help the small and medium newspapers to become more viable and be able to serve the people better.

As the Hon. Members are aware, newsprint is a critical input for publication of newspapers. Indigenous production of newsprint is limited to 50,000 tonnes i.e. less than 1/7 of our total estimated requirement. Foreign Exchange utilisation on account of newsprint has shot up from Rs. 34.5 crores in 1975-76 to Rs. 122 crores in 1979-80. It is expected to go higher during the current year.

In accordance with our national commitment to the freedom of the press, we are arranging for sufficient imports of newsprint to meet the legitimate and reasonable demands of all categories of newspapers. However, the existing imbalance between newsprint consumption of small newspapers (only 8 per cent), medium newspapers (only 23 per cent) and the big newspapers (69 per cent) has made us incorporate certain new features in our policy which will encourage the growth of small and medium newspapers.

One of the important features of the new policy would be to allow a higher initial allotment to small and medium newspapers, to let them have an assured supply in the beginning of the year itself so that they can plan their expansion and growth in a systematic and orderly manner. The basic entitlement of every newspaper will be equal to the consumption level attained in the previous calendar year. On the basic entitlement, an addition of upto 5 per cent on account of increased circulation will be available to big newspapers, on the other hand an initial increase of 10 per cent would be available to medium newspapers and 15 per cent to small on.

Another important highlight of the new policy would be the substantial reduction of the price differential between the newsprint available for big newspapers and that available for small and medium newspapers. Because of various factors including state taxation rates, levy of port charges, unloading expenses, etc. etc., the existing difference between the high-sea sale and buffer stock prices is approximately Rs. 250 per metric tone. Besides, buffer stock sales are also subject to state sales-tax which comes to approximately Rs. 170 per tonne. We have decided to make the high-sea sales price as equal to the buffer stock sale price from ports as would be equitable. Measures to remove the burden of sales tax on newsprint are also under examination in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and State Governments.

Our Government is worried that circulation of newspapers has not kept pace with the increase in consumption of newsprint. We do not propose at this stage to fix any ceiling on the number of pages however much we may like to do so. This matter requires deeper study. However, we have certainly provided for some in-built features in the new policy to encourage growth of readership and circulation. While we will continue the system of mid-year revision of entitlement, instead of basing it on the actual consumption of newsprint, we will now calculate it on the increased circulation achieved.

The other important features of the new policy are as follows:

(i) A longer validity period (6 months) to the small newspapers for lifting their stocks in instalments;

(ii) Opening of more regional depots by the STC which again will benefit largely the small and medium newspapers;

(iii) Import of more newsprint in sheets by the STC to cater to the special requirements of small and medium newspapers. STC will also

examine the feasibility of converting newsprint reels into sheets and supplying the same to small newspapers.

(iv) Introduction of calendar year as the basis for determination of basic entitlements—again to help small and medium newspapers.

I hope and trust that this new policy will assist the small and medium newspapers in concrete terms by making them more viable than they are at present.

I may mention that these are the first steps which we are taking in this behalf. A number of other measures and policy initiatives are under examination for helping the small and medium newspapers. I shall keep the House informed of the decisions taken by us regarding this from time to time.

With these words, Sir, I place public notice No. 1-PR-NP/80 dated July 2 1980 on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library. See No. Lt-987/THE—he\$987mb mb

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI A. G. KULKARNI): Let us now take up General Budget discussion. Prof. Bhattacharjee.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal) Sir, about the statement made just now....

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR (Uttar Pradesh): We want clarifications from the Minister.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI A. G. KULKARNI): That is not the practice.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: It has been the practice.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI A. G. KULKARNI): The practice is that you can write to the Chairman asking him to allow discussion on this.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: We will certainly have discussion. Now we want clarifications from the Minister. Whenever a statement is made, we ask for clarifications.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI A. G. KULKARNI): Please listen to me. Now the statement is laid on the Table of the House. There is no system under which you can ask for clarifications just now. The convention is to write to the Chairman and get his permission for discussion or for asking for clarifications, whatever you like.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: I have been informed sometimes by you that this has been the practice, namely, to seek clarifications on the statement.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (बिहार): श्रीमन् ऐक्सटर्नल मिनिस्टर के स्टेटमेंट पर क्लैरिफिकेशन सब लोगो ने पूछे थे। आप यह क्या कर रहे हैं? स्टेटमेंट के बाद क्लैरिफिकेशन पूछने का हमें अधिकार है। आप प्रीसिजर को गड़बड़ मत कीजिए... (Interruptions).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI A. G. KULKARNI): For Heaven's sake, do not shout. Please try to speak in a way, I can listen to you. I want to understand you. If you shout, it is all a noise that is coming here.

Mr. Mathur, I have been informed by the Secretary-General that some time is given for seeking clarifications. Please go ahead.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर: मंत्री महोदया ने प्राइस डिफरेंशल की बात की है बड़े और छोटे पत्तों में, मगर क्या प्राइस

डिफरेंशल है या नहीं बताया? क्यों नहीं बताया। दूसरे, आपने इंपोर्ट करने की बात नहीं है। कितना इंपोर्ट करेंगे, यह भी आपने पूरी तरह से नहीं बताया। तो प्राइस डिफरेंशल और इंपोर्ट पॉलिसी को आप स्पष्ट कर दें।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI A. G. KULKARNI): May I request the Opposition and the Treasury Benches to cooperate with me? The Leader of the House suggested to me that that if you really want to get satisfied, Mr. Sathe will be available tomorrow to answer your questions. The Minister of State may not perhaps be able to give you satisfactory replies. Please cooperate with me.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: We are prepared to wait.

SHRI G. C. BHATTACHARYA (Uttar Pradesh): It is a sorry state of affairs. She makes a statement, but is not in a position to answer questions.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI A. G. KULKARNI): What is the use of complaining? Mr. Sathe will deal with the problem tomorrow. Prof. Bhattachajee.

**THE BUDGET (GENERAL) 1980-81
GENERAL DISCUSSION—Contd.**

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE (West Bengal): Mr. Vice-Chairman, as I was telling yesterday, the Budget that has been presented is a deceptive Budget, full of—if I may be permitted to use the term—trickery, unexpected of a serious economist like Mr. Venkataraman. The Budget talks of exemption on consumption goods or input-producing consumption goods totalling only Rs. 42 crores. So far as articles of