

to know specifically what the Government have to say on these.

**श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (बिहार) :** उप-सभापति महोदय, यह कमीशन जो पब्लिक एक्सपेंडिचर के संबंध में जनता सरकार ने 29 मई को नियुक्त किया था उस को खत्म कर के यह सरकार बहुत गलत काम कर रही है। जनता सरकार की बड़ी नीतियों में एक नीति यह थी कि सरकारी महकमों में जो फिजूलखर्ची हो रही है उस को खत्म किया जाये। गांधी जी के देश में बहुत फिजूलखर्ची हो रही है। बहुत ज्यादा कांस्पीकुअस कंजंप्शन हो रहा है जनता सरकार ने उस को रोकने के लिये एक कमीशन बहाल किया और यह बहुत अच्छा कमीशन था। इस को खत्म करने से उन का मसूवा बिलकुल साफ हो जाता है। उन की फिजूलखर्ची की जो प्रवृत्ति रही है वह सब खुल चलेगी। आप जानते हैं कि मुल्क में जो इन्फ्लेशन बढ़ता है वह सरकार के कांस्पीकुअस कंजंप्शन की वजह से होता है, डेफिसिट फाइनेंसिंग की वजह से होता है। यह भी एक आस्पेक्ट है उस का। तो उस कमीशन को बहाल रखना ही ठीक था और इस सरकार को उसे खत्म नहीं करना चाहिए। अगर कहीं काम ठीक नहीं हो रहा है तो उस को वह देखता। मगर उन का यह ऐक्शन पोलिटिकली मोटीवेटेड, विडिक्टिव और अनसाइंटिफिक है।

**श्री श्याम लाल यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) :** मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि माननीय मंत्री जी ने तो सदस्यों की भावनाओं का आदर किया और फिजूलखर्ची को कम करने के लिये यह कदम उठाया है। इसके लिये सदस्यों को उन्हें धन्यवाद देना चाहिए कि उन्होंने फिजूलखर्ची को बंद कर दिया।

**SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR (Uttar Pradesh):** I want to know whether the Government intends to substitute the personnel of the Commission by their own men.

972 RS—8.

This morning we heard that from one Commission they are sending out our men and bringing in their own men. Even if you appoint your own men, I welcome it because the Commission will still be there.

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI V. P. SATHE):** Do not confuse between the two Commissions.

**श्री जगन्नाथ पहाड़िया :** श्रीमन्, इसमें दूसरा कोई मेम्बर सदस्य बनाने का सवाल पैदा नहीं होता। कमीशन तो हम इस लिये खत्म कर रहे हैं कि इस पर खर्च हो रहा है और जो स्टेट में आये हैं उन को सरकार ध्यान में रखेगी और इस बात का ध्यान फाइनेंस मिनिस्ट्री रखती है कि कहां ज्यादा खर्च हो रहा है और उस को कैसे कम किया जा सकता है। दूसरी मिनिस्ट्रीज से भी इस के संबंध में सुझाव आते रहते हैं और उन को सरकार ध्यान में रखती है। माननीय सदस्य ने राजनीति की बात कही। इस में राजनीति तो वह ला रहे हैं। राजनीतिक व्यक्तियों को ले कर ही यह कमीशन बनाया गया था। हमारे लिये कोई चारा नहीं है सिवाय इस को समाप्त करने के। वह इस में राजनीति ला रहे हैं। हम राजनीतिक दृष्टि से कोई काम नहीं करते। पोलिटिकली मोटीवेटेड उन का स्टेटमेंट है, इस में हमारी कोई राजनीति इंबाब्व नहीं है।

#### CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

**Government's decision to scrap the Press Commission headed by Justice Goswami and to appoint a new Press Commissions—contd.**

**MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** We will now take up Calling Attention.

**SHRI KALYAN ROY (West Bengal):** You have at least remembered that there is a Calling Attention.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The list of speakers is long.

DR. RAMKRIPAL SINHA (Bihar): Now the time is fifteen minutes to six. Just fix some time. Normally we are supposed to sit only till 6 P.M. today.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief Shri Kulkarni.

श्री श्याम लाल यादव : कुछ समय  
तय कर लीजिए ।

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra): The Minister has already given an indication how the Calling Attention should be conducted, perhaps, based on his experience in the Lok Sabha. In the Rajya Sabha it may be different. I wanted to know from the Minister whether he has made any statement immediately after assuming his Ministership, either at Nagpur or at Delhi when asked by the journalists, that some two or three Members of the Press Commission have resigned. That was the first statement coming out from the Minister either at Nagpur or at Delhi. It is a fact? Then the subsequent statement came that the entire Commission has tendered its resignation. And now the reason given was that the Commission is not being scrapped; vacancies are being filled up. Is it not true that once having said that two or three members have resigned, and having said that if somebody wants to resign he cannot help, that vacancies can be filled up—that might have encouraged the entire Commission to resign? Then, Sir, he alleged that the Janata Party had filled in all the politicians, particularly belonging to their political party as members of this Commission. From the Janata Party there are many failures. It was a party which never ruled this country at all. But one thing they did was, they restored the freedom of the Press. Out of the names I can only think of Mr. Dwivedy and Mr. Moineudin Harris who have some political

background; others have totally no political background; they are all journalists. Perhaps in the Minister's view they may not be toeing the Congress (I) line and he may like to replace them. Is it so?

I am now coming to the comprehensive character which the Minister wanted to give to the new Press Commission. In the old terms of reference, term No. 2 says: "... as a means safeguarding the freedom and independence of the Press against pressure of all kinds, by Government, proprietors, advertising, commercial, trade unions". Has the Minister taken in view the recent case of Mr. Nihal Singh and the previous case of the all-powerful Mr. Birla pushing out Mr. Verghese? How is this type of comprehensive character in the new terms of reference going to be taken care of?

Then, Sir, I quote the last sentence of reference No. 4:

"... relationship that should exist between the Government and the Press, especially with regard to assessment, information, accreditation or official patronage or subsidy".

On the question of official patronage, I want to ask whether in the new terms of reference any reference is being made, that the ruling party which governs this country, through their pressure tactics, will take advertisements in another ten years just as 'Surya' has taken—whether any reference is being made for grabbing advertisements by utilising political pressure. As regards subsidy, what type of subsidies are envisaged, since the 'Harijan' which was started by Mahatma Gandhi had to be closed down because no Government advertisement was given? Is the Minister contemplating to take any such action at this stage?

Sir, the last question which I would like to ask the Minister about

his concern with regard to district papers. I am also one with them. But during the last 25 years we have only shed crocodile tears and nothing has been done for district papers. There is the question of the price scheduled. Even Parliament has passed the law in many things. Will the Minister show courage to enforce it through the Press Commission? What type of action are you going to take to protect all the limbs of the Press Commission, not only the proprietors or journalists, editors, and non-journalists, but going down to the composers? Are their wages being protected?

Lastly, when you were in my party you were speaking about de-linking larger houses from the Press. Since the Minister is a resourceful Minister with all the backing of the Youth Congress, what action does the Government want to take in this regard?

**SHRI KALYAN ROY:** Can the Minister reply after all of us have put questions? That will be better. There is no time.

**SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:** No, No. Mr. Kalyan Roy, please don't introduce this new thing.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE.** Many questions will be repeated. I will reply to all of them together.

**SHRI AMARPROSAD CHAKRABORTY (Best Bengal):** I would like to know whether all the Members have resigned. From the speech of Mr. Kulkarni, it transpires that only two or three Members have resigned. Secondly, is the Minister going to reconstitute the Commission or is he going to form the Commission a new? His statement is not clear on this point. Has the Cabinet accepted the resignation of the entire Commission? Unless the Cabinet has accepted the resignation, I think the Minister can reconsider it. If the Cabinet has not accepted, then we shall ask the Minister, as a normal decorum and as it normally happens in the case of such

commissions, to allow it to continue. We understand reliably that they have almost completed the report. Only two of three chapters remain. The present Government can accept or reject the report. But let them submit the report. Let them ask Mr. Goswami to continue and give the report. I would like to know whether the Minister, as a normal procedure and rule, can think on these lines. In the case of many commissions, our experience is that when the new Government comes, the commission tenders its resignation and the Government normally does not accept the resignations. What is the harm in it? It transpires from Mr. Kulkarni's statement that all are not partisan or partymen. There are persons from different parties' (*Interruptions*) I think the Minister has not yet decided finally on this subject. I categorically ask whether they have finally decided about it. He made a statement in the morning saying that all have resigned. From the record it appears that only two have resigned. Can the Government ask the Press Commission to submit the report as the Commission has already completed its work? There are many commissions. The reports of several commissions are not given effect to. The same thing can be done in this case also. But they should be allowed to continue as a matter of decorum, courtesy and decency.

**SHRI KALYAN ROY:** I think what the members of the Press Commission did is right. Sometime, some norms have to be developed in the country. Sir, I am not one who would say that the Last Press Commission was so innocent as it is claimed. There are people who are very partisan and represent certain political parties who were, unfortunately, accommodated in the last Press Commission which, I think we could not support. The last Minister, Mr. Advani, was very wrong and if Mr. Sathe does the same thing by accepting the resignations of all, and goes on

[Shri Kalyan Roy]

Mr. Advani's way, then he would also be wrong. It was wrong to take certain Members of the Janata Party in that Commission. It will be wrong to pack it up again with some Members of Congress (I). I hope Mr. Sathe would not follow the principles or the line which was laid down by Mr. Advani. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Are you interpreting Khushwant Singh or Girilal Jain?

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Unfortunately, I do not come from Bombay. You have softness for Khushwant Singh.

Secondly, Sir, Mr. Sathe should also see that it should not be packed up by the owner, or owner's representatives as it was done in the last Commission. We find that Mr. Bennett Coleman's representative was there. I do not know why. Thirdly, Sir, I do not think that Mr. Advani was fair to the working journalists. Now he is talking about them. Why is it that last time the working journalists' organisations were totally excluded? Would Mr. Sathe now when he is reconstituting the Commission at least take one or two representatives from the IFWJ and the NUJ? it was wrong to exclude them totally. And then, Sir, Mr. Advani talked about the comprehensive terms of reference. And I do not know how Mr. Advani at that time got this pressure of trade unions. That is absolutely unfair to do. Where is the trade union pressure in the newspapers today? Sir, we find that people who are active trade unionists and who are very brilliant journalists are being hounded out of the 'Statement' and the 'Economic Times'. They need protection. But the last Janata Government put the trade union pressures, perhaps, to please the others, I do not know. I

think, it would be deleted, and the conditions of the working journalists also should come in the terms of reference because, Sir, here I pause for a minute and try to draw the attention of Mr. Sathe to one thing. In the course of last few months or one year, freedom of Press has been seriously threatened. Freedom of newspapers now means freedom of those who own them. B. M. Birla who owns the 'Hindustan Times' and the "Search Light"; freedom of Bennett Coleman, who owns 'the Times of India' and the 'Economic Times'; newspaper freedom means the freedom of consortium of the Tatas and the Mafatlals controlling the 'Statesman'; newspaper freedom means the freedom of Sarkar family who owns Ananda Bazar Patrika group, freedom of newspapers means the freedom of Ghosh family who owns 'Amrita Bazar Patrika'. And they are diversifying money out of the newspapers to the jute business and the sugar business and the real estates. All kinds of things are going on. This is the atrocious thing happening in the newspaper industry. I put it as 'industry'. Today, whatever little rights the editors used to enjoy are being eroded. And there are the same people who talk about the freedom of the Press and the freedom of the speech outside. What is happening in the 'Statesman' is shocking. People are describing the 'Statesman' today as the "Banana Republic". And people who are editing for the last 30 years are being hounded out. As a matter of fact, one journalist has written that the mortality rate of the editors in the 'Hindustan Times' and the 'Statesman' is the highest in the country in the course of the last few years. We find that Mr. Nanjoria has gone, then Mr. Chopra has gone; and that Mr. Nihal Singh has gone. And Mr. Nihal Singh has raised a very serious point which, I think, Mr. Sathe, besides going into the question of the Press Commission, should immediately take up. And this is a direct challenge to the freedom of

the press. What Mr. Nihal Singh has said, Sir? The question was: "You have said that you did not see eye to eye with the management on the editor's role and the responsibilities. What to your mind, should be the editor's role and the responsibilities?" To this, Mr. Nihal Singh replies:

"I think it is the editor's business to run the paper and I do not think it is upto the management to deal with the staff directly on editorial matters. That, I believe is the editor's preserve, and that is one of the problems I had. I found that there were direct dealings with the staff on editorial matters which I found unable to accept. There had been growing interference in the form of the management dealing directly with staff on editorial matters, which amounted to the pre-emption of the editor's rights. An editor must be left free to edit a paper within the ambit of its proclaimed policies."

Sir, that has been totally sacrificed. And what is this fellow called 'IRC'? IRC is the Managing Director getting Rs. 10,000 per month, leaving aside the perquisites. He is, Sir, Cushrow Russey Irani (49), a man from the Tata business and who is now all in all, the super-editor of the 'Statesman'. And, what does he do and what has he done, Sir? How he is interfering and meddling in the editorial matters has been brought out by some respectable newspapermen of the country. One of his instructions was like this: "The CRI—that is the Managing Director—quietly dropped hints suggesting to the newsdesk to ignore or underplay the story about the Indian Ambassador Nani Palkhiwala kneeling down to take measurements for Mrs. Lilian Carter's shoes." Secondly,

6 P.M. CRI asked a newsman to drop one name from a traffic accident since he happened to be that of

the son of one of his close friends. Interference after interference goes on. Not only that, Sir. He misbehaves. He turned out a senior correspondent out of his office. These are the kinds of things going on in big business press. There is no protection. The working journalists, the editors, the sub-editors and reporters are in great panic and fear. I would like to know, because this is vitally concerned and connected with the freedom of the press about which we are talking, what action Mr. Sathe is going to take in regard to men like Mr. Nihal Singh. I do not share his views, his political views, his economic views but what are you going to do about it? Will you allow butchering of a Section of editors, sub-editors and reporters? No. This must stop. Even before the Commission is reconstituted the people want protection from you. That you are failing to give. So, Sir, in this background what I was telling and submitting to you, is that when you reconstitute it you should also include this in the terms of reference and see that this thing is not allowed. I do not know when we are talking about the Second Press Commission so eloquently, why is it that even the **best unanimous** recommendations of the First Press Commission were not implemented? Would you look into it again? The First Press Commission report was given a long time back. It is unfortunate that the Congress Ministry which was in office then refused to implement because it affected the interests of the press barons. The same thing happened when Mr. Advani took over. He also did not try to implement the unanimous recommendations. Again because it affected the interests of the press lords. Now, Mr. Sathe has got a chance. He has been waiting for it for a long time. Because of the good work he put in the Lok Sabha for the last two and a half years he has got it. What steps would he take now to see that this is done.

[Shri Kalyan Roy]

Lastly, Sir, my submission is this. They have done a good work. They were drafting and I think the first draft was ready. They were going into the second draft, the final draft. I talked to some of them. They would have taken only a little more time. Because they have done some good work there may be a tendency among the bureaucrats to delay it. So, the delay part should be avoided. Lastly, Sir, I again request Mr. Sathe that in these critical times he is expected to protect the interests of the working journalists who are being threatened very gravely by the newspaper owners and this witchhunt must stop. That is all.

**श्री श्रीकान्त वर्मा :** उपसभापति महोदय, मैंने और इस सदन ने यह आशा की थी कि पत्रकार होने के नाते श्री आडवाणी जी इस समूचे मामले को एक पत्रकार की तरह रखेंगे। लेकिन ये विरोधी पक्ष के नेता भी हैं और उन्होंने इसको एक विरोध के दस्तावेज के रूप में रखना पसन्द किया। पिछले तीन साल में ट्रेजरी बेंच पर भी बैठ कर और फिर उस ओर बैठकर भी श्री आडवाणी कई तरह के दावे प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता को लेकर करते रहे हैं। प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता के वे चैम्पियन भी माने जाते हैं। लेकिन उनका विवेक उस समय कहाँ था जब 1977-78 में दर्जनों पत्रकार बड़े-बड़े समाचार पत्रों से निकाले जा रहे थे? उस समय उनका विवेक कहाँ था जब उन्होंने के मंत्रालय का आल इंडिया रेडियो 17 पत्रकारों और संसद सदस्यों को बलेक लिस्ट कर रहा था? उस समय उनका विवेक कहाँ था जब उनके आर०एस०एस० के कार्यकर्त्ता जिनका पत्रकारिता से कोई नाता नहीं है सिर्फ इसलिए बड़े समाचार पत्रों में लिए जा रहे थे कि श्री आडवाणी जी सूचना मंत्री थे? इसलिए प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता या प्रेस आयोग किसी भी विषय पर कुछ कहने से पहले हमें खुद अपने गिरेबान में झाँक कर देख लेना चाहिए।

मुझे अफसोस है कि श्री आडवाणी ने शुरू से ही प्रेस आयोग और प्रेस के बारे में एक भ्रामक रवैया अपनाया। जैसे ही जनता पार्टी सत्ता में आई मैंने समाचार पत्रों में पढ़ा कि श्री आडवाणी ने जयपुर में एक वक्तव्य दिया कि जिसका पैसा उसका प्रेस।

**श्री लाल कृष्ण आडवाणी :** मैंने नहीं दिया।

**श्री श्रीकान्त वर्मा :** मैं तो यह कह रहा हूँ समाचार पत्रों में छपा था। आप इसका खंडन कर सकते हैं। बहरहाल अगर यह दृष्टिकोण है तो फिर प्रेस आयोग भी इसी के अनुरूप बनेगा और प्रेस आयोग भी इसी अंदाज से बना। इसी सदन में आपको याद होगा, दो वर्ष पहले लगभग इसी समय श्री आडवाणी जी ने अचानक प्रेस आयोग के सदस्यों की सूचना दी। मुझे नहीं मालूम कि उन्होंने प्रेस आयोग की नियुक्ति के पहले कितनी श्रमजीवी संस्थाओं से बातचीत की, कितने पत्रकारों से सलाह ली और कितने अखबारों के मालिकों से बातचीत की लेकिन इतना मैं जरूर जानता हूँ कि आयोग के सदस्यों में तीन या चार को छोड़ कर कोई भी पत्रकार नहीं था और बहुत से ऐसे थे कि जिनको पत्रकारिता का क ख ग भी मालूम नहीं था, उनके लिए यह एक स्कूल साबित हुआ होगा। उन्हें यह भी मालूम नहीं था कि स्लग क्या होता है, एक पृष्ठ में कितने कालम होते हैं। तो ऐसे लोगों को उसमें नियुक्त किया गया। वे अपने-अपने क्षत्र में गणमान्य हो सकते हैं, गणमान्य वकील हो सकते हैं, संसद सदस्य हो सकते हैं और उस क्षत्र के लिए हमारे मन में आदर हो सकता है। लेकिन पत्रकारिता से उसका कोई ताल्लुक नहीं था। बहरहाल, प्रेस आयोग की नियुक्ति हुई और मुझे भी एक विटनेस के बतौर समन किया गया। वहाँ जो कुछ कहा गया उस पर तो मैं कुछ नहीं कह सकता। लेकिन दो घंटे तक गवाही देने के बाद जब मैं उस कमरे से बाहर निकला तो मुझे सिर्फ इतना ही अहसास हुआ कि यह प्रेस आयोग

[श्री श्रीकान्त वर्मा]

नहीं हैं यह शाह आयोग का विस्तार है। यहां पत्रकारों को अपमानित करने के लिए बुलाया जाता है। यहां पत्रकारों से ऐसे सवाल किए जाते हैं जिनका आन्तरशिप से कोई ताल्लुक नहीं है, बल्कि राजनीतिक प्रश्न पूछे जाते हैं ताकि उनको राजनीतिक स्तर पर नंगा किया जा सके। तो इस प्रेस आयोग का स्वरूप पूर्णतया राजनीतिक था। यद्यपि उनके सदस्यों के प्रति मेरे मन में आदर है। लेकिन कुल मिला कर यह राजनीतिक आयोग था। इसे नाम प्रेस आयोग दिया गया था, लेकिन यह प्रेस आयोग कतई नहीं था। इसलिए स्वेच्छा से अगर उसने त्याग पत्र दिया तो मुझे इसमें बहुत दुख नहीं है। यद्यपि दुख इस बात का जरूर होगा कि इसके सदस्य स्वयं को अपमानित अनुभव करेंगे। लेकिन फिर भी मैं चाहूंगा कि अगली बार जब भी सूचना मंत्री यह नियुक्त करें तो इस बात का भी ध्यान रखें कि ऐसा यह आयोग न हो जिसका स्वरूप राजनीतिक हो, उसमें हमारी ही पार्टी के हित साधन करने का माध्यम बनने वाले लोग न हों, बल्कि जो सचमुच ही अखबार की स्वतंत्रता में विश्वास करते हैं वे लोग हों। उपसभापति महोदय, इसके उल्लेख की शर्तें भी देखिए, वे भी भ्रामक हैं। प्रेस आयोग रोज-रोज नियुक्त नहीं होता क्योंकि प्रेस आयोग कई अन्य आयोगों की तरह चीज नहीं है। इसके सामने 50 साल आगे का नक्शा होना चाहिए और 50 साल पीछे का भी नक्शा होना चाहिए। 25 वर्ष बाद यह आयोग नियुक्त हुआ था लेकिन, इसके उल्लेख की शर्तें इतनी सीमित थीं कि इससे नहीं लगता था कि दो हजार ईसवीं में प्रेस जिस तरह का होना चाहिए उसकी कोई कल्पना यह आयोग कर सकेगा। इसलिए टर्म्स आफ रिफरेंस, जो नये आयोग के होंगे वे व्यापक होने चाहिए, विस्तृत होने चाहिए और उनमें अनावश्यक चीजें हटा देनी चाहिए जैसे कि ट्रेड यूनियन वाला जो

इसमें उल्लेख है वह बिल्कुल रद्द कर देना चाहिए। अगर ट्रेड यूनियन से अखबारों की स्वतंत्रता में दखल होता है तो फिर मुझे कहना पड़ेगा कि लोकतंत्र में भी दखल होगा और फिर तो ट्रेड यूनियनों की जरूरत ही नहीं है। लेकिन ट्रेड यूनियन मैं जानता हूं कि अखबार की स्वतंत्रता को बनाये रखने के लिए जरूरी है। अगर अखबारों में ट्रेड यूनियन नहीं हो तो मालिकों और मैनेजर्स की और भी बन आयेगी। इसलिए इस उल्लेख को बिल्कुल ही रद्द कर दिया जाना चाहिए। एक सुझाव मैं मंत्री महोदय को और दूंगा कि वे जब भी आयोग की नियुक्ति करें तो उसमें छोटे और मझोले पत्रों के प्रतिनिधि जरूर रखें, बल्कि मजदूर यूनियनों के भी प्रतिनिधि रखें क्योंकि वे ही जानते हैं कि उनकी समस्या क्या है और उनका संबंध अखबार की स्वतंत्रता से ज्यादा है वनिस्वत उन लोगों के जो मालिकों के प्रतिनिधि साफ साफ हैं या छिपे तौर पर हैं। इसलिए इनका संगठन व्यापक होना चाहिए और अंत में मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि वे अगले प्रेस आयोग की स्थापना कब कर रहे हैं और उसमें क्या वे छोटे और मझोले पत्रों के प्रतिनिधियों को स्थान देंगे। एक चीज और निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि इस आयोग में कुछ पत्रकार भी हैं और उनको मेरे ख्याल में दूसरे आयोग में शामिल किया जाना चाहिए। उन्हें यह अनुभव नहीं होना चाहिए कि उन्हें किसी राजनीतिक प्रतिहिंसा या बदले की भावना से छोड़ दिया गया। मेरे ख्याल में सरकार को कुछ सदस्यों को, वर्तमान आयोग के, अगले आयोग में शामिल करना चाहिए।

SHRI HAREKRUSHNA MALLICK  
(Orissa): Sir, I want to ask one clarification. I shall not take much time.

Sir, the Press Commission appointed by the Janata Party Government was indeed never a personal vendetta against the party that was removed

[Shri Harekrushna Mallick]

from power in 1977. And it is on record that one hon. Member of this House, Shri Bhola Paswan Shastri, was made Chairman of the Minorities Commission. He was the man least connected with the Janata Party. Similarly, person like Justice Grover and Justice Ansari were made chairmen of the Commission. Therefore, the record of the time that the Government of India has taken in appointing this Commission should be made known to the House or they should be given a reasonable time to complete the report and after that they may or may not set up any Commission, I am not bothered about it.

Then, Sir, the hon. Minister has said that he believes in the freedom of the press and freedom of the press is a very vital issue. It has remained to be vital during 1977 elections and in this election period also. Because they have won they cannot say that night is day and day is night. The country's affairs must run as usual. They should understand that they have been voted for five-year term only and the people of India will have the choice to choose another Government after five years. Therefore, they should not say that day is night and vice versa. So, he has to pick up his own words. The freedom of the press is to be maintained. I am not bothered whether they appoint a Commission or not, but they should keep vigilance on this item of democracy. I feel there should be a parliamentary committee on freedom of the press so that... (Interruptions). Naturally all party members will be there to look into the affairs.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: I suggest that Mr. Mallick should be taken as a member there.

SHRI HAREKHUSHNA MALLICK: Yes, why not?

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV: I also support Mr. Mallick, Sir.

SHRI V. P. SATHE: Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Members for

raising all the issues. First thing, there is some confusion about the number of members who have tendered resignation and much was said about that. I did not say either in Delhi or in Nagpur or anywhere that two or three members had resigned. The first thing that I had said about resignations was after learning of the letter of resignation from the Chairman and all other members together. So that was the only statement issued by me and the entire Commission members had tendered their resignation; that was a statement of fact. So any apprehension based on that can be now removed.

Now many valuable suggestions have been made about the comprehensive nature that we have in mind. Hon'ble Shri Kulkarni himself made some useful suggestions and that is precisely what we are having in mind. How are the working journalists to be protected? What would be relationship of district newspapers and small newspapers? Today, Sir, you will be surprised to know that out of 14,000 newspapers in this country, only 20 chain newspapers utilise more than 80 per cent of the entire newsprint quota. This was such a stunning thing when it came to my knowledge. You can understand the stranglehold of monopoly houses and big houses.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Introduce price-page schedule.

SHRI V. P. SATHE: That is one thing. I agree with you. This question was put to me yesterday at the press conference and I said: "Well, let there be a dialogue. Let there be a demand. We will consider it". Because, as I said, the main papers are under the control of these big houses. Again, whatever editorial, letters to the editor and other publications will come will be only in these newspapers against all this price-page schedule and other progressive measures that you have proposed. And editorials will be read out by no less a person



than my hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Advani, himself from these very papers. The point is we will have to go into this.

Let me say again, I believe that the report of the Press Commission should come as early as possible. I also believe that the Press Commission is not a thing which is to be appointed every now and then. But let this Press Commission be comprehensive. When I said "comprehensive", it was not for the sake of saying. Some newspapers have said that this is a lame excuse and every thing is covered in it. It is not so. The question of delinking, for instance. If you carefully go through the present terms of reference, they are loaded in favour of the vested interests and against the working journalists, against the editors, against the people. What protection are you providing? What is the expeditious, in-built mechanism for remedy? That has to be provided for to protect the interests of editors, working journalists and many other employees. No thought was given to this. Therefore, this will have to be gone into. I would really want a Press Commission which will go into this. That is why I want the Press Commission to reflect the various interests that I have talked of this morning. How have they to be reflected in the Press Commission? I am not thinking in terms of partisan or party lines at all. Press Commission is not a place where we should inject politics—either this way or that way. I really want a Press Commission which would be knowledgeable about all these various sectors in the press and would represent their interests and will be able to bring out really a report which would help the Government to resolve these problems. Mr. Kalyan Roy was saying that I should do something. I myself felt it. I was surprised when I heard that persons have been just removed and victimised in a way, if you ask me. But what powers do I have? Mind you, the moment I think in terms of using the powers of news-

print quota or advertisements or something, immediately people will pounce on me and say...

**SHRI S. W. DHABE (Maharashtra):** What will be the harm if they submit the Report on whatever material they have got? You may accept it or reject it.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** No. That is the thing. Again if it is a half-baked thing, do I go in for another Commission next year? It will be making a laughing stock of ourselves. They will say this is not the term before them and they will not deal with that aspect. So I want a full inquiry to be gone into. The work which they have done on the basis of the terms they had will be used. Say, in a year or so, ten months or so, whatever the new Commission may say, this will be used. Then it will be for the benefit of the country as a whole.

**SHRI HAREKRUSHNA MALLICK:** What will be the guarantee?

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** No, baba. I do not want to reply to my hon. friend, Sir. Sir, these are the main points which my friends had raised and I can assure them; I would be really very anxious if there can be some way of seeing that *inter se* disputes particularly by the management against the workers can be settled. Because, Mr. Dhabe and I belong to the trade union movement and we know what a tremendous agony it is to a workman whatever category he may belong to when years after years he is removed summarily and years after years he is thrown from pillar to post for justice and he does not get it. I know that agony better than many of my friends because I have been dealing with these matters. I really want to be able to solve it.

**SHRI S. W. DHABE:** Representative not only of working journalists but also of non-journalists.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Yes, yes. That is what I said. All interests, I said.

**SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:** Remove political patronage. That is what I want.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Again, as I said this morning, some people seem to suffer from a complex.

**SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:** No, no. Not at all.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** As far as Mr. Kulkarni and I are concerned, we know each other too well. Therefore, I would request him only to consider this. Don't have this complex in your mind.

**SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:** When you are here as a Minister I take you objectively and you also take me objectively.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** I will do that. That is what I am saying. When you repeat again and again "political patronage", there is some sort of guilt complex somewhere lurking about.

**SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:** No, no.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Therefore, I do not believe in political patronage in the press.

**SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:** You deny the press.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** In short, as I said, our sole objective is to have...

**SHRI KALYAN ROY:** How long will you take to reconstitute it?

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** At the earliest.

**SHRI KALYAN ROY:** By next week.

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Well, I said this morning that again I do not want to be guilty of not consulting others. Today itself in the morning I have drafted a letter to all these bodies requesting them to give their suggestions about the terms of reference and how they can be made more and more comprehensive.

**SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR (Uttar Pradesh):** Does it include the Editors' Guild?

**SHRI V. P. SATHE:** Whatever has been said today in the Editor's Guild, I can assure you, there is going to be no deviation. The Editors' Guild also will be consulted.

In short, Sir, in this matter our objective is to have an unbiased approach to this whole issue of the Commission. We will have a proper Commission and I hope that the House will be satisfied not only about the composition but also about the terms of reference and when the Report comes that Report will really be helpful for the country and the press as a whole. Thank you, Sir.

### MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

#### The Appropriation Bill, 1980

**SECRETARY-GENERAL:** Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha signed by the Secretary of the Lok Sabha.

"In accordance with the provisions of Rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose herewith the Appropriation Bill, 1980, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 1st February, 1980.

The Speaker has certified that this Bill is a Money Bill within the meaning of article 110 of the Constitution of India."

Sir, I lay the Bill on the Table.

श्री उपसभापति : सदन की कार्यवाही कल प्रातः 11 बजे तक के लिये स्थगित की जाती है।

The House then adjourned at twenty-six minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Saturday, the 2nd February, 1980.