

The House reassembled after lunch at twenty minutes past two of the clock, Mr. Deputy Chairman in the chair.

REFERENCE TO DEMAND FOR DISCUSSION ON WHITE PAPER ON MISUSE OF MASS MEDIA DURING THE INTERNAL EMERGENCY

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): Before you take up this motion, I have to make a submission. Here we are discussing, in the normal course as we do, some Ministry. It is not a motion. I do not know what it is. It is neither a Resolution nor a Motion. It is good that we are discussing a Ministry here. More Ministries should be discussed. I have no quarrel with it. But, Sir, the White Paper.

DR. RAMKRIPAL SINHA (Bihar): He made this point yesterday.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is not White Paper, I tell you. You will see this. Mr. Ramkrupal Sinha, you should learn also a little. When a Paper of this kind is laid on the Table of the House, it is liable not only to be discussed but to be voted upon also. And, therefore, Sir, normally what we do in such cases is that we bring a motion under Rule 176. It means a motion of consideration when we can give amendments and also vote, and we can also record the opinion of this House. This does not give any chance whatsoever of recording the opinion to the House by way of amendment to the motion as is generally done when you have the kind of motion that I have given and discussed. Now, Sir, if you do it, only we will talk. Certainly today we can talk on this White Paper. But there is no scope whatsoever for registering or recording the opinion of the House By way of a Resolution by way of a motion or any such thing. This is a departure. Therefore, I suggested to the Secretary General yesterday that these two things should not be combined. I have no objection to this thing. I suggested that either separately they should be

discussed or along with it that motion should be allowed to be moved which I have given, so that if any Member wants to give an amendment to that, that having considered the same the House disapproves of the manner in which the mass media was misused, it shall be recorded. We do not have any chance. Sir, every such Report, you will see, since the beginning of this Parliament, whenever it has been discussed, it has been discussed on the basis of a motion for consideration. This has been the tradition and practice of the House. I do not see as to why such an important thing should be left out. Mr. Advani has brought the White Paper, though it conceals more than it reveals. Anyhow, it is an omission. It is very important that you should record the opinion and there should be a substantive motion. This is not a motion here. (*Time bell rings*).

Therefore, I will still urge upon you at least to allow—time is short—that motion to be moved that the House may take into consideration the White Paper laid on the Table of the House and these things to be discussed here. I have no objection to it, because you are also in difficulty and we are also in difficulty that way. Otherwise, it goes by default. This is my suggestion. May I have your permission to at least move that motion? I will not make a speech but just move it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will just discuss the working of the Ministry, what is in the Order Paper today, which means the working of the Information and Broadcasting.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Then, Sir, you do it. The session is ending. We reserve our right to discuss this thing, and I suggest, Sir, as I did last week, I think, that next week, even two or three hours should be set apart to discuss specifically the White Paper. Here the working of the Ministry means so many problems. The White Paper concerns only a part of the Ministry. Media and many other things are also there,

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta]

like employment, service conditions and all that. Therefore, my request to you is that let two hours or three hours be set apart to take that motion into consideration. This is my request to you. You kindly consider it, otherwise it will be a bad thing if this House did not take up this "White Paper under a proper substantive motion.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up 'Discussion on the Working of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting'. Mr. Kalyan Roy.

SHRI KALYAN ROY (West Bengal): Sir, the problem is that it is rather difficult to evaluate the performance of a Ministry like the Information and Broadcasting Ministry in four months. The Minister of Finance, etc. may be discussed in such a short time. But here the interference either by the Minister or by the Ministry may not be immediately seen. It is subtle and surreptitious and invisible. Its full impact is felt later when the damage is done, as it happened in the earlier period. It is more so when a person like Shri Advani is at the helm of affairs. Rarely one comes across such a fine soft gentleman and a smooth person whose voice is so appealing and manner so pleasing and approach so persuasive. He reminds me of the famous movie by Chaplin—Monsieur Verdo. But one wonders whether beneath there is another Advani, a stem fanatic follower of R.S.S., since 1952 spreading his net everywhere to turn the entire media—Radio, T. V. Movies—into a deadly instrument to spread his party's ideals and ideologies. So far as the last three years are concerned, I think there is complete unanimity amongst us that it was the darkest period of the Information

and Broadcasting Ministry. There was suppression of democratic values and norms and all these media were nakedly and ruthlessly used to boost up the prestige of the ruling party, perhaps more so of a ruling clique or coterie of 3 or 4 men. It was a threat. It was a total attempt to deny information to the public. The extent of suppression cannot even be imagined. It was extended even to Tagore. On page 32, paragraph 25, of the White Paper, it is written:

"Some newspapers, and journalists were told that all quotations from Mahatama Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindra Nath Tagore would not automatically be allowed."

As a matter of fact, in paragraph 31 it is stated that one of the editors was called personally by Mr. Shukla and was asked why this particular piece of Rabindra Nath Tagore was printed in his paper. Sir, Mrs. Gandhi Was very blunt. In Appendix VI, page 13, Mrs. Gandhi stated on 9-9-1975;

"I have said in public forums it is a Government organ, it is; it is going to remain a Government organ. We are proud that it is a Government organ."

Ultimately, Sir, it even ceased to be a Government organ. It became an organ of the family of Mrs. Gandhi. So, all the media were used in this fashion. Sir, I would not like to take much time on the White Paper. I congratulate the Minister for it and I congratulate him without any reservation for allowing the opposition parties to use the Radio and the T.V. on the eve of the Assembly elections which was denied to us for the last 30 years on one pretext or the other. But, Sir, it seems that it conceals more than it reveals. Firstly, Sir, it deals with the attacks on certain papers like the 'Statesman' the Indian Express' etc. Paragraphs after paragraphs have been given. On the con-