

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REDUCTION IN NEWSPRINT QUOTA TO NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर (राजस्थान): श्रीमन्, मैं आप की आज्ञा से देश में समाचार पत्रों तथा पत्रिकाओं को आवंटित किये जाने वाले अखबारी कागज में 30 प्रतिशत की कटौती जिससे उनकी अर्थ-व्यवस्था पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ेगा, की ओर सूचना तथा प्रसारण मंत्री का ध्यान दिलाता हूँ।

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): Sir, as Honourable Members are aware, a cut of 30% has had to be imposed in the newsprint entitlement of newspapers for 1973-74 because of a shortfall in availability arising from world shortage. The circumstances leading to the imposition of the cut are as follows:—

Early this year, the Ministry of Finance had approved a quantity of 2,45,000 tonnes of newsprint for distribution to newspapers in the country. This included indigenous production (Nepa Mills) of the order of 40,000 tonnes, which, after deducting a 10% compensation for higher grammage, left a quantity of 36,400 tonnes for distribution. Thus, the newsprint visualised for import was 2,08,600 tonnes.

No difficulty was initially envisaged in procuring this quantity of newsprint from abroad. This was because existing long-term commitments with Canadian and Scandinavian suppliers and Trade Plan provisions from rupee sources already accounted for 1,61,000 tonnes. With an additional 20,000 tonnes offered by Bangla Desh under a global tender, a possible 22,000 tonnes from Canada under Aid and a contracted quantity of 9,000 tonnes of glazed/rotogravure newsprint, the quantity visualised for import stood more than fully covered.

This anticipated availability has, however, not materialised for the reasons set out below:

The Canadian and Scandinavian suppliers insisted on re-negotiation of existing contracts with them on the plea of dollar devaluation. Legal opinion obtained by the State Trading Corporation was that the stand of the suppliers was untenable. It was, however, felt that arbitration or legal proceedings in the country of the defendants could be time consuming and might result in delay in, if not stoppage of, supplies from these sources for one reason or another. As no alternate avenues of purchase were open to cover the quantities involved because of the world shortage, it was further felt that we should take the maximum possible advantage of the existing contracts. Re-negotiation of the contracts was, therefore, started and the result was that, as against an anticipated quantity of 70,000 tonnes from Canada, only 60,000 tonnes has become available and from Scandinavia, as against 30,000 tonnes, only 13,000 tonnes.

So far as the Soviet Union is concerned, agreement on price has been reached for the supply of only 28,000 tonnes as against the Trade Plan provision of 50,000 tonnes. Negotiations for the balance quantity are to be held by the end of 1973. Czechoslovakia has offered only 5,700 tonnes, as against the expected 7,000 tonnes and price negotiations are in progress. Poland will be supplying only 1,000 tonnes as against the expected 4,000 tonnes.

In the case of Bangla Desh, although they had tendered for a quantity of 20,000 tonnes (10,000 tonnes firm and 10,000 tonnes option), they have so far contracted for the supply of only 10,000 tonnes.

Under Canadian Aid, no quantity is available so far. Against a tender enquiry, there were only two offers of newsprint. The newsprint offered was in specifications not acceptable to newspapers in this country. Negotiations with Canadian supplies are still going on.

The official delegation which accompanied the Prime Minister to Canada also took up the question of securing additional supplies of newsprint. The efforts initiated then are being followed up at diplomatic and other levels.

Thus, actual availability so far of newsprint, both imported and indigenous, for allotment in the licensing period 1973-74 works out to 1,63,100 tonnes. Of this, a small quantity has been set apart for new newspapers. This leaves a quantity of 1,57,100 tonnes for allotment to existing newspapers whose performance by utilising newsprint during 1972-73 is estimated at 2,30,000 tonnes. This performance having been taken as the basis of entitlement, the newsprint available can meet only 68.30% of requirements. In other words, there is a shortfall of 31.70%. Hence, the entitlement of a newspaper has been subjected to a cut of 30%. It is specifically provided in the Newsprint Allocation Policy that any addition to newsprint availability would be reflected in a corresponding reduction of the cut imposed.

The cut of 30% will apply uniformly to all newspapers in view of the judgment of the Supreme Court in the newsprint case. Government will, however, endeavour to extend the maximum possible assistance to small newspapers within, of course, the four walls of the allocation policy.

In view of the world shortage of newsprint, the prices of imported newsprint have gone up. As against the prices obtaining in 1972-73, supplies of standard newsprint from Canada will, on an average, cost U.S. \$53.34 (Rs. 400.05) more per tonne, from Scandinavia U.S. \$15 (Rs. 112.50) more per tonne, from Bangla Desh Rs. 143 more per tonne, from U.S.S.R. Rs. 582.17 more per tonne and Poland Rs. 526 more per tonne. The price of Czechoslovakian newsprint is still under negotiation.

The cut in newsprint entitlement and the increase in the price of newsprint will necessarily have their effect on newspapers. They will have to contain their performance within the authorised quota by regulating circulation and page level. Buffer stocks of the State Trading Corporation at all the four port towns of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Cochin have been virtually depleted. Newspapers dependent on them for newsprint are likely to experience difficulty, pending replenishment of stocks. The position should improve somewhat with the ex-

pected arrival of supplies from Bangla Desh in July and August and more appreciably when shipments from other sources start arriving in September/November. It is difficult at this stage to say how the economies of newspapers in the country will be affected. This is because no adequate and reliable data are at present available with Government on the economics of the newspaper industry. It is precisely for this reason that Government have appointed a Fact-Finding Committee to go into the question in all its aspects.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर: श्रीमन्, माननीय मंत्री महोदय ने अपने वक्तव्य में, न्यूजप्रिंट की जो कमी है उस कमी के लिये जितने भी विदेश हैं, जहाँ से हमें न्यूजप्रिंट आयात करना पड़ा है, उनके ऊपर सारा दोष डालने का प्रयास किया है कि वहाँ से हमको ठीक समय पर और ठीक दाम पर न्यूजप्रिंट नहीं मिल सका लेकिन इसमें जो वास्तविक दोषी है वह उनके स्वयं का विभाग है कि वह जितना न्यूजप्रिंट चाहिये उसका आकलन नहीं कर सका और स्टेट ट्रेडिंग कॉर्पोरेशन दोषी है जो कि समय पर उसको भगवा नहीं सका। तो वह उनको दोष नहीं देते हैं। अब इसके साथ-साथ तीसरी चीज यह है कि इसमें राजनैतिक उद्देश्य है। सन् 1972 और सन् 1973 के काल के अन्दर जो देखने में आया वह यह कि सरकार की जो विफलता थी उन विफलताओं का जब पर्दाफाश होने लगा समाचारपत्रों के द्वारा तो यह होने लगा कि समाचारपत्रों का गला किस प्रकार से पकड़ा जाय और समाचारपत्रों का गला पकड़ने के लिये, उम उद्देश्य से, समाचारपत्रों को सरकार भूखा मारती है न्यूजप्रिंट की दृष्टि से। तो यह मूल उद्देश्य सरकार का था। उस उद्देश्य की पूर्ति के लिये एस० टी० सी० और यह इंफार्मेशन का जो डिपार्टमेंट है दोनों ने

[श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर]

मिल कर सुनियोजित ढंग से षडयंत्र किया है और उसका परिणाम यह है कि देश में न्युजप्रिंट की कमी दिखाई देती है। जिस समय दिसम्बर के पहले विदेशों में न्युजप्रिंट की बहुतायत थी उस समय क्या एस०टी०सी० इस बात का आकलन नहीं कर सकता था कि कितनी आवश्यकता है और हमारे यहाँ जो देश का उत्पादन है वह उससे कम होगा और वह जब कि दुनिया में बहुतायत थी तो उस समय क्या नहीं मगवा सकता था लेकिन जब विदेशों में कमी होने लगी और कठिनाई प्रारम्भ हुई तब इस ओर ध्यान दिया। उस समय भी कनाडा ने जो दो आफर दिया उन दो आफरों को भी वह ठीक ढंग से कार्यान्वित नहीं कर सकी। तो उसके लिये हम दोषी हैं। फिर आपने कहा कि स्केडेनेवियन कट्रीज से और कनाडा से नेगोशियेशंस चले तो उसमें विलम्ब जो हुआ और जो जानबूझकर विलम्ब किया गया—जब कि अपनी आवश्यकता थी और उन आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिये कितनी भी जल्दी कर सकते हैं तब जिस प्रकार का विलम्ब किया है इस विलम्ब के लिये दोषी कौन है। जब आपको पता था तो जिन देशों के साथ रुपी-पेमेंट का व्यापार है क्या उनसे सौदा नहीं कर सकते थे, यु०एम०ए० के साथ आपके सम्बन्ध खराब हो गये और जब यु०एस०ए० के साथ आपके सम्बन्ध खराब हुये तो न्युजप्रिंट पर असर पड़ा और उस समय जो रुपी-पेमेंट कट्रीज है जिनके साथ व्यापार था उनसे क्या आप अगाऊ सौदा कर के, और न्युजप्रिंट देश में पर्याप्त मात्रा में कर सके इस दृष्टि से क्या आप व्यवस्था नहीं कर सकते थे।

अब, जहाँ तक स्थानीय उत्पादन का

सवाल है, स्थानीय उत्पादन की दृष्टि से भी सन् 1962-63 के अन्दर जो नेपा मिल्स है उसके अन्दर किस प्रकार से उत्पादन बढ़ाया जाय उसके सम्बन्ध में कमेटी बनी थी लेकिन 1963 ई० में कमेटी बनी और उसका प्रोजेजल आज तक लागू नहीं हो सका, हमारी जो पब्लिक अडरटेकिंग की कमेटी है उसने भी इसको इडीकेट किया है कि अब तक सरकार ने इस दृष्टि से कोई प्रयत्न नहीं किया। प्लानिंग कमिशन भी जरूरी है लेकिन आज “के हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स” में समाचार छपा है :

“It has, however, deferred consideration of its other proposal for production of 133 million tons of paper pending detailed examination of the various projects envisaged ”

इसका मतलब है कि प्लानिंग कमिशन के अन्दर भी इस पेपर के प्रोडक्शन की दृष्टि से जो योजना थी उसको डेफर कर दिया गया है। तो इसका सीधा प्रभाव पड़ने वाला है। जहाँ तक अखबार वालों की बात है, सरकार अपने विज्ञापनों की कटौती नहीं करने वाली है, जितने अखबार वाले हैं वह तो चाहेंगे कि ज्यादा से ज्यादा विज्ञापन मिले, जितना भी विज्ञापन मिलता है वह छापें, तो फिर अगर किसी पर प्रभाव पड़ेगा तो वह पाठकों को मिलने वाली सामग्री पर पड़ेगा और चूँकि सरकार विज्ञापन देती है तो सरकारी समाचार तो उसमें अवश्य छापे जायेंगे तो जो विरोधी दल है उन विरोधी दलों को इसके मामले में प्रभावित होना पड़ेगा, उनके जो समाचार हैं वह बहुत कम छपेंगे और इसका प्रभाव दिखाई देने लगा है। हमारे राजस्थान में, जयपुर में एक प्रमुख समाचारपत्र था अखबारी कागज न होने से वह बन्द हो गया। इन समाचारपत्रों ने अपने

साप्ताहिक सस्करण बन्द कर दिये। 30 परसेंट कटौती का सवाल आता है। क्या होगा। यह अखबारों को भी अपने पूरे आकार के अन्दर जो 30 परसेंट की खिडकी बना कर रखनी पड़ेगी कि इतना गैप कर के बिल्कुल खाली छोड़ना है।

(Time bell rings)

तो इस प्रकार से सरकार की सुनियोजित डग से अखबारों का गला पकड़ने की, विरोधी दलों को पूरी पब्लिसिटी न मिल सके इस कारण से यह सरकार के सुनियोजित षडयंत्र का एक भाग है।

SHRI I K GUJRAL My honourable friend's entire enunciation can be divided into two parts facts and fiction. I may first deal with facts. The basic point which I tried to make in my main statement was that we had long term contracts with all the countries. Some news papers have also written editorially or commented as if India did not have long term contracts. India did have long term contracts. SIC had long term contracts with Scandinavian countries and Canada and of course with Rupee areas which was in the Trade Plan itself. Very unfortunately, as the prices started rising, all of them backed out. I had high hopes that my friend would focus his heat on those who have backed out of contracts and commitments. They backed out of their long term commitments. The contracts were for three years and in the third year they backed out because of price rise. In my statement I had indicated two alternatives. One was litigation and the other was renegotiation. I can give, if the House wants, more details about the long term contracts. The long term contract with Scandinavia was for the firm supply of 20,000 metric tonnes, and the optional supply of 10,000 metric tonnes.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव. आपने तो एक दर्जन देश गिनाए जिनसे काट्रेक्ट है.

श्री आई० के० गुजराल आप बीच बीच में काटेगे तो कैसे जवाब दूंगा? स्केन्डेनेविया का मैंने कहा, कनाडा का कहा। मैं तीन-चार मोटी मोटी बातें ले लेता हूँ। स्केन्डेनेविया से कुछ लेते हैं, कनेडा से कुछ लेते हैं और रूस से और मुल्को से कुछ लेते हैं, मसलन जैसे जी०डी०आर० से, पोलैन्ड से, चेको-स्लोवेकिया से, जो थोड़ा-थोड़ा देते हैं। ज्यादा क्वाटिटी हमारे यहाँ 3 देशों से आती है। जो कनेडा के साथ हमारा काट्रेक्ट था, उसमें जो 2 फर्में के साथ काट्रेक्ट था उसकी डिटैल्स में यहाँ मुहूर्तसर मे अर्ज कर दूँ कि उन्होंने अपने काट्रेक्ट को ब्रेक किया। उन्होंने कहा, जिस कीमत के ऊपर उनका हमारे साथ अग्रीमेन्ट था वह उस दाम पर देने के लिए तैयार नहीं है। यही बात स्केन्डेनेविया के साथ हो गई। हमारे सामने चौइस यह थी, एक तो यह कि हम मुकदमेबाजी करें, लिटिगेशन करें, लेकिन उस वक्त हमारे सामने मुश्किल यह आई थी कि अगर हम और आबिट्रेशन में चले जाएंगे तो जो कागज मिला है वह भी न मिल सके इसलिए हमें नेगोशियेट करना पड़ा कनेडा के साथ भी, स्केन्डेनेविया के साथ भी। रूस के साथ हमारा क्वाटिटी का कमिटमेन्ट हमेशा रहा लेकिन दाम का कार्मिटमेन्ट नहीं रहा क्योंकि हर वर्ष वह निगोशिएट करते हैं। ट्रेड प्लान की तहत में रूस से हमें 50,000 टन हर वर्ष मिलता है, इस वर्ष 28,000 टन का फैसला किया जिसकी कीमत काफी तेज है पहले से। लेकिन जो 22,000 टन है, जसा मैंने स्टेटमेन्ट में कहा, उसके मुतालिक वह फैसला करेंगे इस साल के आखिर में, इसलिए जो डिफिकल्टी आई वह बुनियादी तौर पर यह आई कि जो हमारे तीनों मेन् सोर्सों काफ

[श्री आई० के० गुजराल]

सप्लाई थे, उन तीनों से, जब से डालर का डिवैल्युएशन हुआ, यह तरीका निकाला कि अपने अपने अग्रीमेन्ट्स से निकल गए, इसलिए नहीं कि अग्रीमेन्ट नहीं था, इसलिए नहीं कि वह बंधे हुए नहीं थे—बंधे हुए थे, अग्रीमेन्ट था लेकिन वह अग्रीमेन्ट उन्होंने तोड़ दिया। इसलिए जो हमारी पब्लिक ऑपीनियन में या अखबार में किसी किसी वक्त छपता है कि जैसे गवर्मेन्ट ने अग्रीमेन्ट किए ही नहीं थे, यह बुनियादी तौर पर गलत बात है। अग्रीमेन्ट थे और कैंटेटा से जो हम लेते थे करीब करीब 70,000 टन हम लेते थे और जिस दाम के ऊपर लेते थे, वह कीमत बढ़ाने के बाद 60,000 टन मजूर किया गया, यानी 10,000 टन हमको नुकसान हुआ। स्केन्डेनेविया देशों से 30,000 टन लेते थे, दाम बढ़ने के बाद उन्होंने 13,000 टन कर दिया। रूस हमको 50,000 टन दिया करता था, उसने 28,000 टन देना मजूर किया—22,000 टन कट गया। कीमत भी बढ़ी और क्वांटिटी भी घटी। इसकी वजह यह नहीं थी कि हमने फैसला नहीं कर रखा था।

दूसरी बात जो मेरे मित्र ने उठाई वह यह है कि अगर हम वक्त पर ऐक्ट करते तो शायद यह मुश्किल नहीं आती। वक्त पर ऐक्ट यह करते हैं कि लम्बा अग्रीमेन्ट करते हैं, वक्त पर ऐक्ट यह कर सकते हैं कि जितनी क्वांटिटी आपको लेनी है वह क्वांटिटी आप बांध लें, जो किया गया है। लेकिन अगर कोई अपना वचन देकर उससे मुकर जाए, तो उसके लिए क्या करेंगे? उसके लिए रास्ता यही है कि या तो उसको फिर से देखें या मुकद्दमेवाजी करें। तीसरा रास्ता नहीं है।

एक बात मेरे मित्र ने यह भी

उठाई थी कि 2 आफर्स हिन्दुस्तान को आई थी दिसम्बर के वक्त, एस०टी०सी० को, जो बड़ी फेवरेबल थीं और उसका फायदा हमने नहीं उठाया। एक बात तो यह ध्यान में रखी जाए कि उस वक्त, दिसम्बर तक, जितनी क्वांटिटी हमें खरीदनी थी उसके मुताल्लिक हमारा अग्रीमेन्ट था और जब दो आफर्स हमको आई—अब मैं गलत अल्फाज इस्तेमाल नहीं करता—मैं नहीं समझता हमारे लोग दूसरों की बातों में क्यों आते हैं, क्योंकि हमको तो वे मन्चे आफर्स मालूम नहीं हुए। और आज भी जो तफसील में हमने इन्क्वायरी की, मसलन एक मिल ऐसी थी जिसकी टोटल कैपैसिटी 40 हजार टन की थी और वह हमको 50 हजार टन बेचने के लिए तैयार था। अब यह तो हम लोगो को मालूम ही है कि कौन मिल कहां पर काम कर रही है। ज्यों ही हमने शुरू में इस सम्बन्ध में इन्क्वायरी की तो हमको अन्दर ही अन्दर मालूम हुआ कि वह फैक्टरी तो किसी के हाथों बिक चुकी है और जो आफर देने आये थे वे फैक्टरी के मालिक नहीं थे। कुछ इस किस्म की बातों में लोग जल्दी में चहकावे में आ जाते हैं।

एक बान का और ध्यान रखियेगा कि जितने नेगोसिएशन आज तक इस सम्बन्ध में किये गये, हर डेलीगेशन में और हर नेगोसिएशन में आई० ई० एन० एस० के रिप्रेजेंटेटिव भाग लेते थे। कोई भी नेगोसिएशन और कोई भी डेलीगेशन ऐसा नहीं था जिसमें अखबारों के नुमायन्दे और उनके मेनेजर न हों और हर फैसले में ये लोग शामिल थे। हमने किसी दाम के बारे में उनसे पूछा और न किसी अग्रीमेन्ट के बारे में पूछा। आज भी एक डेलीगेशन कनाडा गया हुआ है और उममें भी अखबार वालों

के नुमायन्दे ही है। उसमें हम लोगों का कोई प्रतिनिधि नहीं है। हमने अपनी एम्बसी से उन्हें मदद देने के लिए कहा है। रूस में भी दो डेलीगेशन गये और दोनों दफा इनके ही लोग गये। जितने दफे यहाँ पर लोग फैसला करने के लिए आये, हर मौके पर, हर वक्त पर आई०ई०एन० एस० के लोग इभाल्व थे। इसलिए आज कोई भी जिम्मेदार मैनेजर या ओनर यह नहीं कह सकता है कि उसको ये बातें मालूम नहीं थी कि क्या होने वाला है, वह यह भी नहीं कह सकता है कि जो दाम दिये गये हैं वह उसको मालूम नहीं थे। वह यह भी नहीं कह सकता है कि आज दुनिया में इस चीज की शार्टेंज आने वाली है और उसको इस चीज की जानकारी नहीं है। आज इस तरह से लम्बी चौड़ी बात करके इमोशन पैदा किया जाय, मेरे ख्याल में यह 'जस्टी-फाइट' नहीं है।

आज हमारे दोस्त ने राजस्थान पत्रिका का जिक्र किया। राजस्थान पत्रिका वालों से मेरी बात हुई और पार्लियामेंट के मेम्बर भी मुझ से इस सम्बन्ध में बात करने के लिए आये। राजस्थान पत्रिका को 1972-73 के लिए जितना कोटा एलाट किया गया था वह उसको पूरे का पूरा दे दिया गया। बदकिस्मती यह हुई कि 1972-73 के लिए जितना कौंटा दिया गया था, उसके दो लाइसेन्सों को वह यूटीलाइज नहीं कर पाया। अगर वह लाइसेन्सों को यूटीलाइज नहीं कर पाया तो इसमें हमारा दोष नहीं है। हम लाइसेन्स दे सकते हैं, अन्न दे सकते हैं, मगर पका कर नहीं दे सकते हैं। इम्पोर्ट लाइसेन्स को यूटीलाइज करने की जिम्मेदारी उनकी है और उन्होंने इस सम्बन्ध में अपना दोष मान लिया है। इसके बावजूद भी हम लोगों

ने 1973-74 के कोटे खिलाफ उनको उधार भी दे दिया। जब वे हमारे पास आये तो एक लोकल अखबार से भी मांग कर दे दिया। अगर कोई 12 घंटे पहिले हमको टेलीफोन करे कि हम अपना अखबार बन्द कर रहे हैं, तो फिर इस तरह के केंसों के मुताल्लिक क्या कहा जा सकता है, यह चीज आप खुद जान सकते हैं। लेकिन एक बात यह है कि वह अखबार बन्द नहीं हुआ और यह एक अच्छी बात है कि वह अखबार आज भी काम कर रहा है। हिन्दुस्तान का कोई भी अखबार बन्द होने वाला नहीं है और न इस तरह का कोई रिस्क है। यह बात जरूर है कि इस चीज में मुश्किल जरूर है और यह मुश्किल सारी दुनिया में आई हुई है। एक बात वहाँ पर ध्यान में रखने लायक है और वह यह है कि वह मुश्किल हमारी लाई हुई नहीं है। आज सारी दुनिया में न्यूजप्रिन्ट की शार्टेंज है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय, सारी दुनिया में जितना न्यूजप्रिन्ट बनता है उसका 40 प्रतिशत सिर्फ कनाडा में बनता है। दुनिया में जितनी न्यूजप्रिन्ट की खपत है उसका 40 प्रतिशत अमेरिका खा जाता है। इसका नतीजा यह निकलता है कि अगर कुछ खपत बढ़ जाय तो उसका असर सारी दुनिया की मार्केट पर पड़ता है। पिछले दो वर्षों में जो फलट पैदा हो गया था उसका कारण यह था कि अमेरिका के अन्दर कंजम्पशन कम हो गया था जिसकी वजह से स्केडिनेविया और कनाडा में फैक्टरिया बन्द हो गईं। जैसे ही डिमान्ड बढ़ी तो ये लोग अपनी फैक्टरिया फौरन शुरू नहीं कर सके। यह कुदरती बात है कि फैक्टरी शुरू करने में एक आध साल लग जाता है।

[श्री आई० के० गुजराल]

हिन्दुस्तान के अन्दर नेपा ही एक फॅक्टरी है जो अखबारी कागज बनाती है और उसका 40 हजार टन का प्रोडक्शन होता है। हम इस बात की कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि इसका प्रोडक्शन डब्लुल हो जाय। अगर इसको डब्लुल करना है तो उसमें दो तीन वर्ष तो लग ही जायेंगे। जो प्लान्ट हम केरल में लगा रहे हैं वह 80 हजार टन का है। इस तरह से दो प्लान्ट पब्लिक सेक्टर में हो गये। एक प्राइवेट सेक्टर के भाई न इस तरह का प्लान्ट लगाने का लाइसेन्स ले लिया है। वह हिमाचल प्रदेश में इस तरह का प्लान्ट लगाना चाहते हैं। वह कई वर्षों से इस तरह का प्लान्ट लगाने के लिए लाइसेन्स लिये बैठा है और न तो खुद लगाता है और न ही दूसरा को लगाने देता है। वह किसी न किसी बहाने इस चीज को टालते जा रहा है। अब आप इन सब बातों को ध्यान में रखकर किसी जजमेंट पहुंचिये।

एक बात मैं और कहना चाहता हूँ और उसे कहे बिना रहा भी नहीं जाता है। मेरे मित्र को तो लम्बी चौड़ी बात और तकरीर करने की आदत है और वे हमेशा यह कहते हैं कि अखबारों को मारना चाहते हैं। मैंने कई दफा कहा और मैं आज फिर नम्रता से कहना चाहता हूँ कि गवर्नमेंट की इस तरह की पालिसी नहीं है। गवर्नमेंट की पालिसी यह है कि इस मुल्क के अखबार फ्री रहें, इस मुल्क में अखबार खूब बढ़ें इस मुल्क के अखबार खूब पढ़ें क्योंकि हम फ्रीडम ऑफ प्रेस की बैमोन्ट्रेसी का एक अंग मानकर चलते हैं। यह हमारी पालिसी नहीं है, यह तो कास्टीट्यूशन में कमिटमेंट है जिसके साथ हम बंध हुए हैं। इस तरह का इल्जाम लगाना कि हम जानकर इस तरह की स्थिति

लाये हैं, एक गैर जिम्मेदाराना बात है।

SHRI K P SUBRAMANIA MENON (Kerala) Sir, the honourable Minister gave a very long statement explaining as to how this thing has come about. But, Sir whatever may be his explanation the fact is that as in the case of other necessities of life, one more item of scarcity has been added now. From shortage to absolute scarcity, now we are entering the newsprint also.

Now Sir the matter is not so simple as the Minister has explained. These things could have been foreseen when the dollar was devalued last year and again there was devaluation this year. It could have been foreseen that it is axiomatic that the mills will demand more because they do not buy at the old prices, because their cost of production will be more and naturally they will demand a higher price. But the fact remains that the Government and the SFC have bungled the whole thing and today we are faced with a serious situation. Not only is there an 80 per cent cut in the allotment but the prices have also gone up very much. This, of course, is beyond our control. It is a different question. But the point is that along with the cut in the allocation, an increase in price will put a terrific strain on the resources of the economy of newspapers. Already, newspapers are closing down or are on the verge of closing down. This is no good for our democracy. And what happens is that the first type of newspapers will be small newspapers, run by small proprietors or run by small parties like us, which will be affected most, and that is where the danger to democracy arises.

Therefore, Sir, I say that it is no use trying to gloat over the thing. It is no use trying to justify the situation, saying that the Government has been doing every thing about it. The Government should try to get fresh supplies.

We have got very good relations with Bangla Desh. Let us pay a little more to Bangla Desh instead of giving it to the Canadians or the Scandinavians. I would say that in order to keep good neighbourly relations, even if we have to give a little higher price to Bangla Desh, let us get all the newsprint that they pro-

duce so that we can feed our newspapers here.

Another thing I would like to ask is: What special steps are the Government going to take to see that small newspapers do not die?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: I think, Sir, since I was speaking in Hindi, my hon. friend did not fully understand what I said. The basic issue is that we had firm commitments with countries for the quantity that we needed. What other steps could have been taken even if the dollar was devalued? Is it being suggested that we should have gone to them and told them: Please charge us more because the dollar is devalued? The basic issue was that firm long-term contracts existed. They had the quantity and the price mentioned. The dollar devaluation was not a factor mentioned in the contract itself. It was nowhere laid down that if the dollar is devalued the price will be revised. Therefore, so far as the legal commitment was concerned, we were on a very firm ground. When they wanted to negotiate, we promptly re-negotiated also. We did not lose time. Even on that ground, it was in our favour. But we did not hesitate; we went and re-negotiated. We had to pay more and we had to get less supplies also.

So far as small newspapers are concerned, as I have already stated, I repeat my sympathy and my feeling of anguish. But the situation that has arisen is for all newspapers—small newspapers and big newspapers. It is not a question of 'A' newspaper or 'B' newspaper. Of course, the economy of small newspapers is not very strong. We have taken one care. We have decided that all the existing newspapers which are up to 15,000 circulation and have 8 pages, will not be affected by the cut. Therefore, the small newspapers to that extent will get covered. We have taken steps and we have recommended to the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Industry that the existing ban on white printing paper should be withdrawn so that the newspapers can use the white printing paper.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON:

It is very costly. Even newsprint is very costly. It is very unfortunate. The cost factor has become of lesser relevance now. We have tried to do our best to come to the rescue of the papers. Our efforts are continuing. The Prime Minister took up the case when she went to Canada.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): I read her speech. In her speech to the Members of Parliament, the Prime Minister said, "We have no ideologies to import. We have other things to import." It seems that the Canadians have not exported the newsprint.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Many other countries who say that they have ideologies to export have not given the newsprint. That is apart.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI (Maharashtra): The hon. Minister has said that the total requirement is 2,30,000 tonnes and our availability is only 1,63,000 tonnes. That means we are short of about 37.1 per cent. When we know that we will have to depend on others for our need of newspaper print, can we not have a little buffer stock to tide over some difficulties? Why are we not thinking in terms of having a buffer stock?

Then I would like to know from the Minister about the State Trading Organisation which is looking after this import of newsprint. The State Trading Organisation is looking after thousands of items and this is one of the items on which they have bungled in the sense that they have not paid their full attention to the requirement of newsprint of this country with the result that we are today in this difficult position in spite of the fact that we had certain contracts. Sir, in view of the fact that dollar was devalued, we should have envisaged that something of this nature would happen and therefore we should have started taking action in this regard.

The third thing which I would like to point out is that instead of entrusting this thing to the State Trading Corporation, is it not desirable after this experience

[Shri Babubhai M Chinai]

that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry should take care of import of this newsprint?

Also, Sir, I would like to know from the hon Minister whether there was any escalating clause in the contract which we entered into with the Scandinavian countries or Canada so that they could get the clue to get out of the commitment. I would like the Minister to enlighten me on this point.

The NEPA Mills was set up over 20 years ago. Its current production is less than 40,000 tonnes. In the meanwhile you said that two public sector projects are coming up. One private sector project has not come up at all. I have information that in the last 10 years a number of licences were given to private parties to manufacture newsprint in Assam, Maharashtra, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. Now, all these licences have not fructified. Have you gone into it and tried to find out why no licence has fructified? Is it due to some price factor? Is it that the State Government has not helped them? Will you please explain to us what is the reason for this?

Then will the Government clarify whether the control over prices of newsprint made it difficult for entrepreneurs to undertake production or whether the concerned State Governments did not extend necessary facilities?

Then I would also like to know whether there is any proposal for setting up of a captive plant in Canada with you or with the Industry Ministry or with you and the Industry Ministry jointly so that our requirement can be fulfilled till we are self-sufficient. If so, will you kindly give us some details of that captive plant? Then I would like to know whether with this 30 per cent curb in newsprint the Government proposes to ensure that the interests of the consumers are safeguarded. There may not be cut in the number of pages as you said but I hope, simultaneously, the price of the newspaper will also be cut.

Sir, I would like to know whether there is any proposal to allow newspapers to

charge a higher tariff for their advertisements in lieu of this. I would also like to know whether the present cut will adversely affect the small newspaper and language newspaper and if so what steps are proposed to be taken to safeguard their position. Finally, I would like to know whether the Government has any fear in their mind that by this cut some foreign countries will have a dominating power on certain newspapers and thereby will penetrate in the country in the newsprint and newspaper industry much more than what they are supposed to do at present.

SHRI I K GUJRAI Sir, my hon friend has raised quite a few points which are very important and significant. The first point that he has raised is about the buffer stock. I might tell my hon friend that we have been carrying buffer stocks. For instance in April, 1972 STC had about 18,000 tonnes in the buffer stock. Newspapers are allowed to draw on this buffer stock whenever there is delay in shipment etc. But as you know the newsprint is a perishable commodity. We cannot store it for a long time because it gets affected by pesticides and its strength also diminishes. Therefore, it has to be disposed of quickly. Unfortunately, since December the situation has been deteriorating and the result has been that it has drawn heavily on the buffer stock that we had. Although by about January this year we had about 10,000 tonnes in our buffer stock the situation now is not so good. This buffer stock policy has paid dividend but unfortunately we do not have much of it.

So far as anticipatory steps were concerned as I have informed my friend already, the anticipatory steps were taken in the form of contracts. (Interruptions) The Law Ministry's advice to us was that the contract was totally favourable to us and our stand stood totally vindicated so far as the contracts were concerned. The Law Ministry did say that if we were to go in for arbitration or litigation the contract was in our favour.

SHRI BABUBHAI M CHINAI Was there any price fixed?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: No, there was no price fixed, there was no price hike. The price clause was there so far as Canada and Scandinavian countries were concerned, on mentioned prices, firm commitments as well as options were mentioned. We have satisfied ourselves that the contracts were satisfactorily drafted and they were in our favour but discretion is a better part of valour sometimes and I think discretion had to be used this time.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI: What about taking the newsprint in your department?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: So far as taking the newsprint in the Ministry of I and B is concerned, as it is, we formulate the policy, we work in close collaboration with the STC. The difficulty is that the total import quantum ranges from Rs. 25 crores to about Rs. 27 crores annually. Now to set up a department for this much is not a very practicable thing. It is a very small item. Then, it is also spreadover. I think in all we are importing from 8 to 9 countries. Sometimes it is a very small quantity, for instance, thousand tonnes from one country. Therefore, to set up an organisation only for this would not be a practicable proposition.

So far as NEPA is concerned, I hope my hon. friend remembers the history of Nepa. Originally it was not set up under public sector. It was set up by a private party. I think the project was wrongly conceived. Then the Madhya Pradesh Government took it over and from the Madhya Pradesh Government this Corporation took it over but it has always been suffering from the problems of congenital deficiencies. The availability of raw material in that area, the type of plant that was installed, the type of management that was provided—all these naturally had an overall impact on its total performance. But I am told something is being done and by the next year we will be able to do something; it might go up to 70,000 tonnes.

So far as Kerala is concerned, Kerala is a public sector organisation. Steps are being taken to step up and we are hoping that by about 1978-79 we will be in a

position to get about 80,000 tonnes. Regarding the other projects as mentioned by my friend, so far as I know, subject to correction, I think there is a mix-up between the newsprint and paper projects. I think most of the projects that my friend has mentioned are paper projects. So far as I know the newsprint was only the Himachal one and there, I have already informed my friend, the party which took the licence has not taken steps. So far as the price factor is concerned, it has been the mentioned time and again that perhaps our price structure is a type of structure which does not provide incentive. Now that is very difficult for me to swallow because for instance in NEPA we have been selling, if I remember correctly, three years ago when I was in this Ministry earlier, at about Rs. 1,000 a tonne. Now we have been offering till last year about Rs. 1,365 per tonne. I think there may be some increase now. Kindly keep one thing in mind that it has been an economic price though small parties there to have not been able to increase may have suffered. Now one of the entrepreneurs said that he would set up a unit if he was assured Rs. 2,000 per tonne. How can I do that? Even in spite of the rise that we agreed even today we are providing it at a much lower price and this demand was there three years ago when the price was much lower. Therefore these arguments are used just as a cover for many of their deficiencies.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI: Captive?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: So far as captive plant is concerned, this idea was mooted in our Ministry after this situation arose. I have been feeling two things. First we should explore the possibility of having captive plants. Also we started sounding if either from Scandinavia or from Canada some parties would be interested; we could set up a plant. The initial response that we have received through our diplomatic channels is encouraging but I think it is too early for me to say anything in detail about it. I can only say this that we would encourage both the propositions.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI: News-paper price and advertisement charges.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: So far as newspaper price is concerned, as I have said in my statement unfortunately reliable data is not available. We set up a fact-finding committee more than a year ago and I was telling newspapers all the time that it is in their interests to give us data so that we really know what the economy is like. So it is not a question of bargaining but unfortunately the newspapers did not co-operate. Then you would remember, Sir, we had decided to give the Committee powers under the Commission of Inquiry Act which we have given and now some data is coming in. I can only say at this stage that if convincing data is provided our reaction will not be unsympathetic.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI: Advertising?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: I am saving with respect to all whether it is price or advertisement charges. The only thing is it is too early for me to commit myself but if any case is made out before me my reaction will not be unsympathetic because I am keen that the newspapers must continue to function.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kumbhare

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI: What about foreign interests?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am calling Mr. Kumbhare. You cannot go on asking while the Minister is replying.

SHRI N. H. KUMBHARE (Maharashtra): It has been stated by the hon. Minister that because of the Supreme Court judgment there will be uniform cut in the supply of newsprint to all the newspapers irrespective of whether they are big or small. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether that judgment will come in the way of giving protection to the small newspapers and if not whether the Government contemplates to give some protection to the small newspapers.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: As I have said, the judgment does not give much option to us but some protection will be afforded

to papers which have a circulation up to 15 000 and 8 pages

DR. K. NAGAPPA ALVA (Mysore): Sir, it is now 25 years after independence. From the figures that are available our domestic output is only about one-seventh of our requirements. I must say that the Government has totally failed in their policy, in their programme, in their import and more than anything else in their attempt to have greater output in the most important sphere of newsprint production. Sir, it is clear that there have been contracts between Government and Government of friendly countries. When I look at the figures I find that Russia has also failed to supply over 50 per cent of what it promised. There have been contracts with private firms where the shortfall was only one-seventh. Newspapers are the most effective instruments for the creation of public opinion in the country. The success of democracy depends on the public opinion that is created and the Government is responsible for enabling newspapers to have the widest possible circulation. It is more so in this country. When the Government is having complete authority over All India Radio, television, etc. the circulation of papers must increase, but what we are seeing from the performance of the Government is they have failed miserably. It looks as if there is an attempt to curb newspapers, to curb the freedom of the press. I must also say painfully there is an attempt to have a committed press. Even this I doubt. In Ceylon what kind of Government there is? There in the name of diffusion of press management, they have taken over large paper concerns. I am only coming to the point to say that there is definitely a grand design. The Minister, the spokesman of the Government have been repeatedly saying about the diffusion of press ownership and other things. This creates a doubt in us as to whether the Government have made sincere and serious efforts to have larger production of newsprint in this country and implement the programme. I do not know whether the STC have done their very best in this matter. It is a very important matter. Will the Minister give a categorical assurance to this House that he will make every attempt to see that the minimum

quantity of newsprint is supplied to these papers, big and small alike? At the same time they should make an effort from now on so that by the end of the Five-Year Plan we will be, as far as possible, self-sufficient. Also, the long-range agreements and contracts that we will be having should be effective enough so that we may have the supplies. I must once again emphasise that this is an onslaught in a way on democracy and freedom of press. I cannot say whether it is a grand strategy or not. But whatever it is, the fear in the public mind must be removed by you, and it is for you to see to that. I know the potential in this country itself, in the matter of production of newsprint it is so much. You make a sincere effort. I know that you can do this. And I want a categorical assurance that there will not be room for the people of this country to say that there is onslaught on democracy and the freedom of the press itself.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, you will agree that it is more of a political speech which my friend has made, and I do not think it has a very direct relevance to the subject we are discussing. But I will only say one thing in reply to him that he has been very allegorical so far as the 25 years of freedom is concerned. We are proud of this 25 years of freedom. Even about the press we are talking of, the number of newspapers in India has multiplied many times, circulation has gone up considerably, and our investment in newsprint also has been going up every year. There has been a steady rate of growth both in the number of papers, in the pages of papers and in the circulation of papers. Therefore the Government's policy has been always to encourage the growth of the press, which is bearing fruit.

One thing more—my friend will keep in mind that every country in the world does not manufacture newsprint, and every country in the world is not self-sufficient in newsprint. There are only a few countries in the world which manufacture newsprint because of the locational situation of the raw material itself. In our country we are manufacturing it to an extent. But a new problem has been posed before the industry for the last three or

four or five years. I mean industry not in the sense of newspaper industry, but in the sense of newsprint industry. The newsprint industry depends upon wood pulp. Now, as my hon. friend would know, wood pulp can be used for newsprint, it can also be used for rayon and it can also be used for tyre cord. And therefore even the countries which have been conventionally and traditionally manufacturing newsprint are also thinking whether economically it is better to manufacture newsprint or to manufacture rayon or manufacture tyre cord. And I think this is one of the dilemmas which have always been before the Industry Ministry. I have been associated with the details regarding Kashmir. For instance, at one stage we were thinking of setting up a newsprint factory there. But then the technologists said, if we are going to use the same pulp, then why not use it for tyre cord or for rayon, which would definitely give a more growth rate economically, and export it and import newsprint? These are the issues which cannot be settled across the House like this in a debate. But basically kindly keep in your mind—we have been increasing our foreign exchange allocations every year for the import of newsprint. And this year, in spite of the economic situation being what it is, in spite of the fact that there is a considerable strain on our foreign exchange resources, the Department of Economic Affairs was very nice to us, they gave us a very good allocation. But we have not been able to utilise it because of world scarcity. The situation is not due to Governmental policy. I can only assure my friend, Dr. Alva, that we on this side of the House, now and before, when he was with us also, have always been committed to the freedom of the press, we have always been committed that the press must continue to prosper. But one thing he should keep in mind—he has drawn my attention to what he has chosen to call the delinking and diffusing of the press. Government has repeated here, and I am repeating here—we stand firmly committed to the policy that big business must be delinked from the newspaper industry. It is not in the interests of the freedom of the press. And that is why we are trying to follow that policy, and I hope that my friend, Dr. Alva, in spite of the fact that he has crossed over to the Opposition, is today not speaking

[Shri I K Gujral.]

on behalf of those who own and want to control the newspapers

SHRI ABU ABRAHAM (Nominated)
There are only one or two points which I want to make. According to a statement privately circulated by the IENS, the Government rejected the contract that was offered from Canada two years ago, when the price was 175 dollars per tonne, on the ground that it was five dollars more than the world market price. I would like to know if this is true.

Secondly, I would like to know if the Minister thinks that there is a likelihood that a number of journalists and others might lose their jobs because of the crisis.

SHRI JOACHIM ALVA (Nominated)
Why should the journalists lose their jobs? Take over the industry.

SHRI ABU ABRAHAM I want to know whether the Government will be able to take any steps to prevent that.

SHRI I K GUJRAL So far as the working journalists are concerned I hope no newspaper owner will be unwise to resort to this unhealthy practice and I hope steps will be taken to absorb the strain that is being caused and it will not be passed on to the working journalists. Of course, the Government will try to come to the rescue of the working journalists. I hope that situation will not arise.

So far as some paper which has been circulated by the IENS is concerned, it is a very strange type of argument, wisdom of this kind, that I am now being told that two years ago when newsprint was available in abundance at cheaper prices I should have, at that stage, bought it at higher prices because it suited some foreign manufacturer who were buying at cheaper prices. Our needs were being met. Our long term contracts had been signed. This is a very unbusinesslike proposition being made by businessmen that two years ago I should have bought at five dollars more when I was putting it at five dollars cheaper.

SHRI A G KUIKARNI (Maharashtra)
Much of the questions have been asked. Now only two points I want to get clarified. Mr. Gujral has stated that within the four corners of the decision of the Supreme Court the small newspapers and the regional newspapers would be supported in regard to the supply of newsprint. I want to have a categorical assurance when this matter is being raised on various pretexts and all the time the Government is coming forward with the Supreme Court judgment. I can understand the anxiety of the Government to give the highest respect to the Supreme Court judgment but the regional and local newspapers have got the more importance and priority value as regards the dissemination of news and building up of democracy at rural level. May I know from the Minister whether in keeping with whatever the legal advice he has got, is there any possibility of giving weightage particularly to the regional and district level papers which are suffering very badly because of the 30 per cent all round cut? There must be some selective approach under one respect or the other because Mr. Gujral is clever and pragmatic enough and knows the value of rural education through the newspapers.

My second point is the suggestion made by my colleague, Mr. Babubhai Chinai, about the joint sector foreign capital projects. When Mr. Gujral himself knows that in this country or in any foreign countries the conventional raw material is exhausted, there is an alternative raw material like sugar cane bagasse. He is himself aware about the joint sector projects run by the co-operatives because in U.P., Bihar, Maharashtra, Mysore and in Tamil Nadu large numbers of co-operative sugar factories have got the raw materials. Mr. Gujral knows very well. Instead of having joint sector projects with the foreigners, why do you not have joint sector projects with your own colleagues who have got raw materials to offer? But the only snag which you yourself have understood is the problem of price. The NEPA price you have raised to Rs. 1,300.

SHRI I K GUJRAL It will be raised more.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: You have to accept one point. I do not want to go into the economics of these projects. These projects are very heavy capital intensive. According to the World Bank for one plant of about 200 tonnes you require Rs. 30 crores. The World Bank does not give loan because the production created out of Rs. 30 crores investment is Rs. 5-6 crores. So unless the Government of India, as a policy decision, comes out to help the cooperative sugar factories to have these newsprint plants with bagas, which is the only solution, this type of thinking would not be banished once and for all from the Government's mind.

Lastly, I want an assurance from the Minister that it is rightly suggested that because of the 30 per cent cut the journalists are going to be affected. I know definitely that the press barons will take benefit from this reason of 30 per cent cut. So you must assure this House about the price factor. They can increase the rates for advertisements of luxury goods, cosmetics and all those things, but the price of the newspaper must be assured as it is and the services of the journalists must be safeguarded.

SHRI JOACHIM ALVA: The Minister must guarantee that nobody will be sacked.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, my hon. friend is a very learned co-operator and he co-operates whenever the situation is difficult. That is why one of the things that he has suggested of late is the bagasse technology and I must pay him a compliment because he has taken pains to go to Mexico and study the details of this technology.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You sent him?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: No, he went on his own. But he has studied the bagasse technology and I think the proposition that he has submitted to the Government is under examination. I think if bagasse can be utilised as raw material for manufacturing newsprint, it will be a very good augury for this country.

So far as the price is concerned, naturally it is difficult for me to say offhand what will be the price of a plant which will be set up after the new technology is accepted.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I did not ask about it. I said you should have a joint sector with the co-operatives, not with foreigners.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Well, if it is a joint sector between me and Mr. Kulkarni, we can start it tomorrow. But the difficulty is that I do not decide about the joint sector or about the financial policies. The concerned Ministries do it. But the proposition that has come from the co-operative sector needs consideration and I hope it will be considered sympathetically. So far as this Ministry is concerned, I can assure him that we have supported and we will support the idea of new technology being given consideration.

So far as the point regarding small newspapers is concerned, I have said that within the four walls of the . . .

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Break those walls.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Outside the four walls there is only jail. I hope my friend does not want me to go to jail; if he wants me to do it, I might. But I have to confine myself to the four walls of Parliament which is a great sanctuary . . .

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: What is the chance of justice to the small people if you go on talking like this?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, my hon. friend is a Member of Parliament. It is for him to decide what place should be given to the Supreme Court judgment; it is not for me to decide. The Supreme Court judgment is before all of us. It is a public document. I am not saying about anything which is known to me only. So, as I said just now, we have been able to give this much of limited benefit for newspapers which have a circulation up to 15,000 and have eight pages, newspapers with four pages and a circulation of 30,000

[Shri I K Gujral]

and so on—you can go on calculating accordingly, I am not good at mathematics—and that is that this sector of newspapers will not be affected by the cut, and they can have circulation up to that level

So far as working journalists are concerned, as I have said just now, I do hope that the wiser men in the newspapers will not resort to reduction in the staff or to showing the boot to the working journalists because we are all with them. I am sure ways and means will be found to see that the working journalists are not affected because after all, freedom of the press is for the working journalists and I hope they will continue to do their work

SHRI ABU ABRAHAM How long will this situation last?

SHRI I K GUJRAL I cannot say because it depends on the world situation

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA We are intrigued to hear that the Matador of Rajya Sabha i.e. Mr Kulkarni, has been to Mexico. But that will not solve any problem. Now the Prime Minister had been to Canada. Other Ministers are going. But the newsprint crisis continues all the same. When the Prime Minister went to Canada, I thought that such problems would be taken up. When I read her speech, she was telling the Canadian MPs that neither country had ideologies to export but they had material goods to export. I thought that newsprint contracted by India would be taken up as one of the export items from Canada to India. But it seems that Canada gives neither ideas nor material goods. But I would like to know whether the Government or the Ministry concerned took up the matter with the Foreign Ministry in order that they could, in their turn, take up with their counterparts in the exporting countries and find out why there have been such blatant breaches of contracts. Not that we can do very much. But if necessary you take up the matter diplomatically with the countries which do not honour their contracts or do not ensure that the private parties in those countries fulfil their contractual obligations with other countries or the Governments of other countries

Sir, we are now facing an extremely difficult situation and the small newspapers are the most hit. I am not so much worried about the bigger newspapers, they can look after themselves. I do not know how much newsprint they have got. It is well known that some of the big monopolistic press, or the jute press you call them, had built up their buffer stock or whatever stocks they are. And there had been blackmarketing in newsprint. And I know that in Calcutta, one newspaper house, with the largest circulation of Bengali and English editions and other weeklies also, was selling newsprint in the blackmarket. The matter was brought to the notice of the House, investigation was made, the CBI went into it and the report also came out. We do not know what action had been taken against this paper. I have in mind the Anand Bazar Patrika group. We do not know what is happening and we should be told about it. It is well known that certain other chain newspapers indulge in blackmarketing of newsprint. They make money by selling newsprint in the blackmarket and then utilise this money for buying shares or cornering shares and so on. I think, you should be on the lookout for such quarters where Mr Goenka ruled, apart from others. He is in trouble already. So, that aspect should be gone into. What is the protection to the small and medium newspapers? How are they going to be protected? I find that the big newspapers have resorted to a technique of bringing out market supplements. They consume paper. They are escaping any restraint on advertisement. Let them earn through advertisements but consume only cheaper paper instead of using scarce paper or earning money or making profit. Can we not think of some law, some regulatory and other measures which would stand the constitutional test in the Supreme Court in order to check such things on the part of big papers which are now resorting to the technique of diverting their paper for bringing out their so called market supplements, consumer supplements and other supplements in order to just earn money? That should be gone into

Secondly, Sir, with regard to the question of small and medium newspapers, has the Government considered discussing this matter with the Working Journalists Organizations in order to evolve some kind

of a scheme to meet the emergency so long as we are not in a better position? That is very, very essential. Consultation should take place with them and also with the owners of the small and medium newspapers with small circulations. Have any steps been taken in this direction? Then, in this connection, I should also like to know another thing and that is about production. I was a little disturbed when I heard that he would be prepared to invite Canada and other foreign interests to set up factories here. Why? We can get their technical knowhow whenever we like, should it become necessary. But surely we need not allow them to have investment in this country and then start another chain of industries in the paper industry and allow them take away money from here. Why should it be done? Production should be in the public sector. I know my friend, Mr. Kulkarni, is in a co-operative sector and he has made the co-operative sector something very interesting . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Joint sector.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Well, joint sector is entirely a fraud and it is a bogus sector in this matter. And I think the Minister has not made up his mind. Why have you given licences to them? Why did you give licences to them which have not been honoured? They have pocketed the licences and done nothing. Why do you not revoke these licences and disqualify them for any future licences? These people stipulate that unless the Government assures that a certain quantity would be bought from them, they would not set up factories and materialise the licences. Is it the way to deal with such people? Therefore, I say that the Government should work out a scheme of production, projects of production. I think the time has come when we must try to be self-sufficient as far as possible, to the maximum extent possible, in the matter of production of newsprint in the public sector. That is very, very essential today. A suggestion has been made, some people advised him . . .

(Interruption)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You should wind up now.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: . . . sell them in the market, earn money, import newsprint and start running the newspaper. Is it the way to run the newspaper? Newspapers are a vital aspect of our national and public life. Surely they should get the needed priority in this matter and we cannot make that contingent upon getting imports by seeking export where there will be all kinds of bottlenecks, blackmail, pressures and other international difficulties. Why then should the Government not go in for production of newsprint, explore the possibilities of starting immediately in the country with the assistance of favourable terms from foreign countries our own factories in the public sector for producing quality newsprint? It is possible to do so. Has there been any estimate of the possibility of raising the production of newsprint within a given time, with given resources? Has your mind been applied in this direction? You are groping in the dark going to Canada and Scandinavian countries finding nothing and making speeches all the time and getting some speeches here also. That is all about it. Therefore, this is how it should be handled. (Time bell rings). Finally, before I sit down, passingly he mentioned the Government is committed to the delinking of newspaper from industrial houses. I have been hearing it for the last fifteen years or more than that, seventeen years . . .

SHRI PITAMBER DAS: You are used to it by now

SHRI N. G. GORAY: That means the commitment is a long-term commitment.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I do not know. In the meanwhile I have seen many Ministers of Information and Broadcasting getting delinked not only from the Cabinet but also from the ruling party and from public life. That delinking process is taking place, but the other delinking which we were promised, the delinking of the press from the industrial houses, has never materialised. Why? Big barons and tycoons have built up mounting pressure on the Government and others with the help of some officials and some prominent political personalities, well fortified in their seats of authority and power. Why is this

not being done? May I have an assurance from the hon. Minister as to the time limit? How many times assurances have been given that within such and such time, during this session, the next session, the session after that, the Bill will come? But never it came. I know that Shri Gujral will say something. He is a smart young man and I have no doubt in my mind his will be a smart performance which many Ministers are incapable of. I know that. But smartness is no substitute for political honesty or for moral standards in public life. I am not blaming him. I am charging the Government of making immoral statements in Parliament and finding one excuse after another with a view to evading the measure which should have been taken many years ago and for which there is commitment under the report of the Press Commission and by the various statements made by the Government on the floor of both Houses of Parliament.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: We all have a great deal of respect for Shri Bhupesh Gupta and whenever he says something we treat it with a great deal of respect.

First of all, I would like to clarify one thing. When the question was asked about the Canadian offer of captive plant or setting up a plant here, I did not enunciate any policy. I must clarify it. There is no specific proposition before the Government. The only thing I said was this. I want to clarify that, if I was not clear enough. So far as financing policy is concerned, whether foreigners should come, whether it should be in the joint sector or private sector—these are all outside the purview of this Ministry. We do not enunciate any policy on this account and therefore I am not making any statement whether it is *vis-a-vis* Canada or Scandinavia or any other country. So far as setting up of the plant is concerned, that is for the Ministry of Industry to decide, when any specific proposition comes up. At the moment no specific proposition has come. Only initial or preliminary soundings have been initiated by us to check up as to what steps we can possibly take to meet our future deficit. Therefore my friend Shri Bhupesh Gupta can rest assured that if newsprint comes here, it will be within

the overall policy of the industrial policy of the Government. If according to the industrial policy newsprint should continue to be totally in the public sector, naturally it will be so. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has neither been asked nor have we offered any opinion about the change of the policy in this context.

So far as delinking is concerned—he spoke very enthusiastically about it and I appreciate that—he will recall that we have not been able to bring forward the Bill or Act on this because of two or three reasons. You will recall that there were two Supreme Court judgments—majority judgment and minority judgment—recently on the subject. The last judgment has come only recently. That by itself was a limitation on us. As long as we have not come to the conclusion so far as these judgments are concerned, we are not in a position to finalise the Bill on delinking which is in keeping with the policy commitment made here. But I can tell you that we are definitely going to do it. We stand committed to it. We are studying the judgments and I hope very soon we should be in a position to meet the needs of our commitment. We want to do it. It is not either to oblige Shri Bhupesh Gupta or anybody else. We ourselves feel that freedom of the press can be assured only if the delinking takes place.

As regards the production of small newspapers is concerned, I have already explained it. And the type of protection we are trying to give to smaller circulation papers. I have already mentioned and therefore I will not repeat it. So far as working journalists are concerned, I hope no such eventuality will arise. I hope no such situation will arise . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Supplements of big papers?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: The Supreme Court judgment says that we cannot tell them how to use newsprint. We can only give them newsprint.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You cannot tell them. But certainly you can cut their quota.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: We are cutting 30 per cent.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Cut more.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: The judgment is clear that we can only cut equally for everybody.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In that case, let the matter be discussed. Your object is being defeated when they use the newsprint for other things. They may not increase the page. But they would use it for other things. Therefore, you should discuss this matter with the officers and see what can be done.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: So far as this is concerned, I can tell you one thing. If you want to know my views or the views of my Ministry on the subject, we are entirely in agreement with you, because we feel that the present policy of allowing some of the newspapers to have 50 per cent or 60 per cent or 70 per cent of the quota utilised for advertisements only is defeating the very purpose of the newspaper itself and we are in agreement with this. We also feel strongly that it is not only this that the reader does not get the worth of his money that he pays, but also, at the same time, the foreign exchange that the country spends on importing the newsprint is also not well utilised. Therefore, so far as I am concerned, so far as my opinion is concerned and so far as the opinion of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry is concerned, there is no difference of opinion between Mr. Bhupesh Gupta and myself on this issue. . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: They are issuing consumer supplements, etc.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: The limitation has been set by the Supreme Court judgment. . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: How long will you wait? Why not discuss it?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: We are going to set up a small committee in connection with the Press Council and we will utilise that occasion to discuss these issues also.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why Press Council? You are going to the Press Council for this?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Please do not misunderstand me. I am going to invite a small committee of the Members of Parliament in connection with the Press Council—and I am not going to the Press Council—on which, I hope, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta will also be there.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Then you are inviting trouble.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Well, I have always loved the trouble that my friend, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, gives, because trouble though it is, it is also enjoyable at the same time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Yashpal Kapur.

श्री यशपाल कपूर (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
उपाध्यक्ष जी, मंत्री महोदय ने बड़ी काब-
लियत से सभी बातों का जवाब दिया
और इस मसले पर रोशनी डाली है
और मेरी कुछ बातों के बारे में मेरे
बुजुर्ग श्री भूपेश गुप्त ने कह दिया है लेकिन
फिर भी मैं दो तीन बातें मंत्री महोदय
के सामने रखना चाहूंगा।

यह तो ठीक है कि आपके 30
परसेंट कट से अखबार छोटे हो जायेंगे
और उनको पढ़ने के लिये जो छः
छः सात सात अखबार पढ़ते हैं जरा कम
समय लगेगा लेकिन देखा यह गया है
कि अंग्रेजी का अखबार तो वही 12
सफे का छप रहा है और हिन्दी का
अखबार 6 सफे का हो गया है। तो
यह सुप्रीम कोर्ट का जो जजमेंट है कि
30 परसेंट कट बराबर सब पर लगेगा
वह प्रैक्टिकल में क्या हुआ, इस बात
को आप देखें, अखबार तो आपके पास
भी रोज़ आते होंगे—अंग्रेजी का अखबार
तो 12 सफे का चल रहा है और हिन्दी

[श्री यशपाल कपूर]
का अखबार 6 सफे का हो गया और जो उर्दू का अखबार है या और जो दूसरी हमारी देशी ज़बानें है उनके अखबार है वह तो बेचारे कहां है। जो अभी प्रीमियम चल रहा है आपके न्यूजप्रिंट का वह 600 रु० या 700 रु० का प्रीमियम है। और आपने जो इजाजत दे दी कि वाइट प्रिंटिंग पेपर पर भी अखबार छप सकेगा तो उसका क्या व्यावहारिक रूप में असर पड़ेगा। वह यह होगा—जो बड़े अखबार है, जैसा कि डिलिकिक का आप सोचते है, तो जो लिक्स है उनको अपने न्यूजप्रिंट का कोटा खरीदने के लिये अपने पास पैसा न हो तो भी दूसरी कम्पनियों से पैसा उधार मिल जाता है और वह अपना पूरा कोटा खरीद कर रख लेते हैं। अखबार क्या छापते है। जितनी गणना देते है उससे कम छपता है। तो उनके पास पैसा इस बात के लिये हो मकेगा कि वह वाइट प्रिंटिंग पेपर खरीद लें और जो न्यूजप्रिंट आपने फारेन एक्सचेंज खर्च कर के, इम्पोर्ट कर के, उनको दिया है वह भी प्रीमियम पर छोटे अखबारों का दिवाला निकालने के लिये बेच दें। इसलिये मेरा निवेदन है कि मंत्री महोदय जब आप किसी ऐसी चीज को करते है तो सब बातों को देखे और वाइट प्रिंटिंग पेपर की भी, माफ कीजियेगा, कोई हमारे देश में बहुतायत नहीं है, विद्यालयों के लिये, पुस्तकों के लिये कागज नहीं मिल रहा है। तो आपने अगर वाइट प्रिंटिंग पेपर को न्यूजप्रिंट में डाइवर्ट कर दिया तो क्या होगा। न्यूजपेपर मुबह पांच मिनट पढ़ने के बाद, चाहे आपके देश के बने हुये कागज का हो चाहे आपके इम्पोर्ट किये हुये विदेशों से खरीदे हुये कागज का हो, रद्दी बन कर रह जाता है। यह ठीक है कि इसके साथ साथ रद्दी की कीमत भी बढ़ गई है। तो

क्या हम अपने फारेन एक्सचेंज को, क्या हम अपने वाइट प्रिंटिंग पेपर को जो कि हमें अपने बच्चों की किताबों के लिए चाहिए वह रद्दी बनने के लिये अखबारों को देते रहें। क्या यह सही है। जो अखबार डेढ़ डेढ़ लाख, दो दो लाख छपते हैं वह जरूर डेढ़ लाख, दो लाख, छपें। उनकी जो भी छपने की तादाद है उस पर मैं समझता हूं कोई लिमिट लगा देना उससे फ्रीडम आफ प्रेस पर कोई चोट नहीं आती है। छोटे अखबार, हमारी अपनी राष्ट्रीय भाषाओं के अखबार, तो काट दिये जाए और बड़े अखबार, अंग्रेजी में छपने वाले अखबार उसी तरह से चलते रहें, यह बात बर्दाश्त के काबिल नहीं है।

मैं यह कहूंगा कि यह जो न्यूजप्रिन्ट इम्पोर्ट के बारे में कैंनेडा के साथ हुआ क्या यह भी कोई कारण है कि साल दो साल से ईस्ट वेस्ट और वेस्ट कोस्ट कैंनेडा का जो शिप्टिंग फ्रेट के तहत है, उसका झगड़ा चला रहा है और हमारा शिपिंग मंत्रालय, हमारा जहाजरानी विभाग, अभी तक कोई निर्णय शिपिंग कपनीज से नहीं करा सका। अगर यह कारण है कि वह फ्रेट का जो फर्क है दोनों साहिलों के बीच में, तो उस में भी अगर अपने साथ जहाजरानी के मंत्री से कहेंगे कि जल्दी सेटल करें तो मेरा खयाल है कि आप ज्यादा न्यूजप्रिंट वहां से ला पाएंगे।

SHRI JOACHIM ALVA: The 'Times of India' and 'Indian Express' have a circulation of 10 lakhs . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him wind up.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, my friend has pointed out that some Hindi papers have reduced their pages but not the English papers. I may only say one thing that the allocation that we are making is paper-wise,

and not group-wise. So it is not as if any chain paper might say that it can be transferred. That is not permissible. Therefore, if they are cutting Hindi and are not cutting English, they will come to grief because we will not be giving them any additional newsprint. Whatever is possible at the rate of 80 per cent cut will be given to every paper—not to chain group as such.

The second point raised by Mr. Kapur is about the black marketing in newsprint. Now we have got four circulation checking teams which go to all papers to check up their circulation. We have found that some papers over-state their circulation. We have taken penal action in the past. But I might say that so far we have been lenient to the extent that we have only cut down their newsprint allocation. Now I have warned them that from now on any paper, big or small, which is found to be misusing the newsprint or which is found to be making a wrong statement will be prosecuted under the law. And this action we are going to take in a very firm way, whatever may be the paper.

So far as the bigger circulation papers are concerned, my friend should keep in mind that all big circulation papers in India are not English papers. They are Indian language papers like 'Matrubhumi', like the Bengali papers 'Jugantar' and 'Ananda Bazar Patrika', and Malayalam paper like 'Manorama'. Such papers have got a much wider circulation. We are proud that the Indian press has come up in Indian languages and they are having bigger circulation.

So far as the freight difference between the east and west coasts is concerned, I am told that for the current year there is no freight difference between supplies from two Canadian coasts. The freight is uniform now—at forty-eight dollars.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shinde

(Interruptions)

SHRI PATIL PUTTAPPA (Mysore): Sir, I have been trying to catch your eye for a long time. I wanted to ask a very brief question . . . (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, please . . . (Interruptions). Mr. Shinde.

STATEMENT RE DROUGHT SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE): Sir, with your permission, may I lay this statement on the Table of the House?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You lay it on the Table of the House. Since it is an important statement, it may be circulated to Members, and they will ask questions tomorrow.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a statement on the drought situation in the various parts of the country. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-5189A/73.]

REFERENCE TO ALLEGED POLICE ATROCITIES ON ZOOLOGICAL PARK EMPLOYEES

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, I have to draw your attention to the news item which appeared in yesterday's Indian Express. I have enough information of the subject matter even otherwise "Delhi Zoo workers observed a strike today in protest against the alleged police atrocities on their union leaders. According to the employees, their leaders were severely beaten up." Mr. Om Mehta, please note it. The Home Minister is never in the House. He is the leader of the House. Where does he sit? Can you give me his address so that I can go and read it to him? He should give some more time and grace the House with his longer presence.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Om Mehta will convey to him.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Shri Om Mehta is always here. "They were severely beaten up by the police both in the zoo and at the Tilak Marg police station yesterday."

"The union claims that the unwarranted assault on peaceful employees of the Zoo-