

MEDIA OF MASS COMMUNICATION

*678 SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the resolution passed by the Foundation Conference of Indian Secular Society held in November, 1968 on "media of mass communication"; and

(b) if so, what are the views of Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The views expressed in the Resolution have been noted by Government

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN : Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister says that the views expressed in the Resolution have been noted by Government. But I had asked specifically whether the Government agrees with the views expressed therein or not. The Minister has not replied to that. May I therefore know whether it is a fact that more time is given by different radio stations to kirtans, pravachans and discourses on Vedas rather than to discourses from other religions and other cultures ? May I also know from the hon. Minister whether this is in the interests of the secular character of our Government ? If this is so, will he enquire into the whole affairs ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, the Vandana programme is broadcast from all the stations in the morning and all component cultures of Indian life receive attention in an adequate measure.

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN : I have specifically stated that the radio stations give more time to discourses in the Vedas as well as to Kirtans held in the radio stations and that more time is given to these rather than to talks or discourses in the other religions of other communities. This is a very specific thing which I am asking. May I know from the hon. Minister whether, if he has no information at present about such things hap-

pening in the radio stations, he will enquire into it and see that this imbalance is removed ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, I am not aware of any such imbalance ; that is the point, and I am unwilling to accept that there is imbalance.

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN : Will he enquire into it ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : I know it and so I say that there is no imbalance.

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN : Sir, in view of the fact that the country at present is charged with communal feelings and there are interested communal parties who are creating misunderstandings about the objectives of secularism, will the hon. Minister draw up a very comprehensive and extensive programme to educate the people with regard to the secular objectives through the medium of the radio stations as well as through documentaries and other media of mass communications ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : As part of the National Integration Council functioning a sub-committee was set up to look into the mass media. They have come out with a comprehensive report and that is being implemented. I would recommend to my hon. friend to have a look at that report, because then he will come to the conclusion that the mass media factors are trying to build up secular attitudes.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN : Is it not a fact, Sir, that any programme depends upon the decision of the Cabinet, which has got all the Ministers in the Cabinet. And the Ministers are all human beings, and unless the Minister who is charged with this administration has got any faith in the Gandhian ideology and philosophy, he would naturally resort to the ideology in which he has got confidence, namely the Bolshevik ideology. Does it not therefore mean that the functioning of the All India Radio depends upon the ideology the Minister professes ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, the hon. Member's contention is incomprehensible as I have known him for a long time as a very responsible person, and I think he knows that the Radio functions in a different fashion from what he thinks. And the Radio is there for everyone to

judge. It is not a question of any person's ideology. It is the ideology of the country that we are talking of, and secular approach is the country's commitment.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : May I know, Sir, from the Government, in view of the importance of developing secular ideology and a scientific outlook in the people, whether the Government of India will stop playing records of * * * and such other * * *

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : He is using objectionable words. He must withdraw them.

SHRI NIRANJAN VARMA : In the context they are highly objectionable words. He may not have faith in religion but he is offending other's religions by using such objectionable words.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Be moderate in the use of your language.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : . . . which are quite jarring to the ears of reasonable people, and devote more attention to develop a scientific outlook and a secular ideology in the country?

SHRI SUNDAR SINGH BHANDARI : The objectionable words should be expunged, Sir.

SARDAR NARINDAR SINGH BRAR : Sir, the objectionable words should be expunged.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I shall look into it, and if it is improper, I shall see what I can do.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : May I say this, Sir, that the Vandana programme that we have in the morning from all stations varying from thirty minutes to forty-five minutes is very popular? Some surveys also were conducted, and we have also been looking into it and seeing how far it is popular. This is a very popular programme of devotional songs which we are having in the morning, and I would request my friend just not to injure the feelings of others by making such remarks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Shantilal Kothari.

श्री निरंजन वर्मा : श्रीमन्, मैं बार-बार खड़ा हो रहा हूँ, मुझे नहीं बुलाते ।

* * * Expunged as ordered by the Chair

श्री समापति : मैंने नोट कर लिया है, अगर टाइम रहेगा तो बुलायेंगे ।

श्री निरंजन वर्मा : मत बुलाइये साहब ।

श्री समापति : अभी से आपने तय कर लिया कि नहीं बुलायेंगे ।

श्री निरंजन वर्मा : श्रीमन्, मैं बार-बार उठता हूँ लेकिन आप कभी ध्यान नहीं देते ।

श्री समापति : आप हिसाब लगाइये तो यह नहीं कह सकते, इस साइड में मैं आलटर-नेटली बुला रहा हूँ ।

श्री निरंजन वर्मा : श्रीमन्, आपकी कठिनाइयों को मैं ध्यान में रखता हूँ . . .

श्री समापति : ठहरिये, जल्दी नतीजे निकालिये ।

PROF. SHANTI KOTHARI: Mr. Chairman, the issue of secularism being very important and the All India Radio as a mass media communication being the most powerful one, may I say this, Sir—the Minister referred to that hon. Member to read the report on mass media—that having gone through the report I wonder if the Government has discovered several inadequacies about the educational institutions and in the mass programmes.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, so far as the educational institutions are concerned naturally the Minister concerned would be looking in to it. So far as the mass media is concerned, it is under constant review, and whenever lapses come to our notice in this context, we naturally try to correct them. But I would like to say this thing. Secularism is not built up by talking about secularism. Secularism is built up by broadcasting programmes which project our component cultures and also . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : You are in charge of an institution whose function is to talk.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : I only reflect what my friend does here. The main point, Sir, is that the Radio tries to put across the salient features of Indian life and Indian culture and a composite approach.

PROF. SHANTI KOTHARI : I hope the Minister is not identifying the educational process with the talking process.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have said it. That will do. No more question.

PROF. SHANTI KOTHARI : He has to reply Sir. May I know what steps after that report, they have taken to implement that report ? It is no talking business the report has to be implemented.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Niranjana Varma.

श्री राजनारायण : श्रीमन्, आपने समझ लिया। धर्म-निरपेक्ष और धर्म-विहीन दो शब्द हैं। मंत्री यह समझ नहीं रहे हैं। वह धर्म-निरपेक्ष कह रहे हैं, यह धर्मविहीन की बात है।

श्री सभापति : आप बैठिये, उनको तो सवाल करने दीजिये।

श्री निरंजन वर्मा : क्या श्रीमन् को यह मालूम है कि श्री वैशंपायन जी ने जिस सोसाइटी के बारे में कहा है, जिस फाउंडेशन काफ़्रस आफ इंडियन सेकुलर सोसाइटी के बारे में कहा है, वह सोसाइटी किसकी है, क्या है और क्या इस सोसाइटी का कोई मेमोरेण्डम आपको मिला है ? यह जो सोसाइटी है वह किस चीज़ के लिये है ?

SHRI C. D. PANDE : Bogus society Subhadra Joshi's society.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please listen now to the answer.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, it is difficult for me to say about the standing of the Indian cultural forum but Mr. K. K. Shah received a letter from this Society about a seminar that was held in Bombay.

SHRI A. D. MANI : Who is the president of this Society ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : The president is one Mr. A. B. Shah, and there are the members of the committee. I do not know much about all this.

SHRI C. D. PANDE : Bogus body.

श्री निरंजन वर्मा : क्या यह रजिस्टर्ड बाडी है ? क्या यह आपको पता है, यह आपको मालूम है ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : I cannot say.

SHRI B. T. KEMPARAJ : Sir, I want to know from the Minister what exactly is the ideology included in the creation of a secular society, and secondly whether the Government is placing any copy of the resolution on the Table of the House. Thirdly I want to know how far in this resolution the question of untouchability has been tackled and the media of communication have been taken up by the Government to propagate the idea of removal of untouchability if a secular State has to be created. Fourthly, Sir, I want to know how far this resolution will help the Indian society to see that communalism will be put an end to and what are the methods adopted by the Government.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, unfortunately I am being asked to talk more about this forum, which is not a Government sponsored body, nor has Government anything to do with it.

SHRI SATYA NARAYAN SINHA : There are so many forums.

SHRI CODEY MURAHARI : Sir, on a point of Order. Such questions, I do not think, should be admitted at all or you must not make an exception. Suppose tomorrow I send a question asking whether the Government has taken notice of the Resolutions passed by the Samyukta Socialist Party, is it going to be admitted ? I would like to know.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Don't ask me about it.

SHRI CODEY MURAHARI : If you are admitting this type of questions then there will be a number of questions relating to the Resolutions passed by the SSP from tomorrow onwards.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right; I shall bear that in mind.

Now, Question Hour is over.