

SHRI NIREN GHOSH : Have you received any helicopter? That is my simple question.

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : Well, we have.

SHRI A. D. MANI : May I ask the Minister of State what is the general diplomatic practice observed by the Soviet Union in regard to the giving of hardware of this kind—like helicopters—to Pakistan, because the Soviet Union is interested in maintaining the balance of armaments in the sub-continent? Do they inform us or we come to know of it from other sources?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : The Soviet Union, so far as this matter is concerned, maintains that this is a commercial transaction. It may be of a particular size and may even carry troops. Many other things can also carry troops, even bullock carts can carry troops, but that is a different matter. Since it does not affect the military balance and since it is not assistance of a military nature, the question posed by the hon. Member does not arise.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Sir, may I know from the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs whether Government is aware that, apart from the Soviet Union, the Pakistan Government has been purchasing a large amount of military hardware from different countries and that they have very recently purchased some Mirage-3 from the French Government at a concessional price? May I know whether Government is aware that Pakistan's air strategy is being developed around Mirage-3 and what the Government wants to do about it?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : That is too large a question and it is primarily for the Defence Minister to answer. But it is our duty to keep ourselves informed of the military purchases and other activities of that nature by the Pakistan Government.

PRESS COUNCIL ACT

***331. SHRI KRISHAN KANT :** Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce a Bill to amend the Press Council Act to protect the spirit of the original legislation;

(b) whether Government have studied the demand of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists for amendment of the Statute to facilitate the reconstitution of the Council; and

(c) whether Government have noted the demand of Shri Mudholkar for financial independence and freedom from parliamentary control for the Council and revision of certain definitions incorporated in the Press Council Act?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI NANDINI SATPATHY) : (a) Government have not still made up their mind about introducing a Bill as suggested in part (a) above. Government propose to introduce a Bill to extend the Act to Jammu and Kashmir.

(b) The demands of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists are under consideration.

(c) Although no formal demand is received yet Government are aware of the demand of the Chairman of the Press Council for financial independence from Government control, the implications of which are under consideration.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : Sir, in view of the fact that there has been a lot of criticism about the functioning of the Press Council and the unsatisfactory working of the various sections of the Press Council Act, I do not know why the Government is taking so much time to reconsider and to bring forward amending Act in the form of a Bill before this House, when the situation is such. May I know from the hon. Minister if it is a fact that Mr. Chalapati Rao, a prominent and progressive journalist of this country, was asked to become a member of the Press Council but he declined to associate himself with it? And, secondly, is it a fact that the nominated Member of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha on the Press Council, who represents this august House, wanted to resign from the Press Council because of its bad functioning, and that it was at the request of the hon. Minister that he has withheld his resignation and since then has not been attending the meetings of the Press Council?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Sir, this is a very difficult question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : How it is difficult?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : The Press Council is an autonomous body. The Press Council does not like any inquiry also by us.

SHRI A. D. MANI : It is under parliamentary control.

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Therefore, if the House asks me, Sir, I shall find out and place the information before the House. If on my own I make any inquiries, then it will be resented by the Chairman of the Press Council. But the House is supreme. If you ask me to inquiries, I will make the inquiries. but I wanted to take a little cautious line on this.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : We should be associated.

SHRI GANGA SHARAN SINHA : Sir, I do not want to take the time of the House during the Question Hour, but as the Member representing this House on the Press Council, I would like to take your permission after the Question Hour is over to place some facts before this House, because I am in a very embarrassing position. Therefore, as the representative of this House I would like to place facts before you and through you to the House after the Question time is over.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : May I submit, Sir, that after the statement has been made by Shri Ganga Sharan Sinha, a half-an-hour discussion be allowed on the subject?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Two hours' discussion.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : So much is not necessary.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I suggest to Mr. Sinha to make the statement so that it would be useful.

SHRI GANGA SHARAN SINHA : I shall do so, Sir, but I do not want to take the time of the Question Hour.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : At this stage he can make the statement, a good thing. Sir, you have been flexible enough and that is the majesty of your ruling. After that we should be allowed to put supplementaries. After that

you should kindly fix some time for a brief discussion—Press Council is a very important matter.

SHRI GANGA SHARAN SINHA : Personally I have no objection but it will take some time, and I do not want to take the time of the Question Hour.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : I put my second question now, Sir. Has the Minister come to know that there have been complaints that the proceedings of the Press Council are not properly written or are changed or manipulated later on, and that the Chairman considers himself supreme and the Council is treated only as an advisory body—in practice?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : I have to make inquiries because it is an autonomous body. May I request at this stage that if the hon. Members put all the questions then it will be possible for me to be prepared for the half-an-hour discussion? You wanted half-an-hour discussion.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I want two hours' discussion.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : Sir, may I know if the Government is aware of the fact that right from the beginning, right from its formation, the Press Council has been involved in quarrels amongst its members and at the moment it has no representative of the working journalists? This has been in existence for more than one year. May I know what action, if any, the Minister has taken to remedy that glaring defect, which has made the Press Council ineffective and useless? And, secondly, Sir, may I know if the Government is aware of the fact that the Chairman and some members of the Press Council have been making trips abroad and producing nothing? May I know if prior sanction of the Minister was taken for the trips of the Chairman and his colleagues abroad and, if so, what amount of money was sanctioned to be wasted in these trips?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Sir, under the Press Council Act I have no powers to control this; it is entirely left to the executive committee of the Press Council. It is true that there is a dispute going on between the Federation of Working Journalists about their representation, and the Press Council. In my unofficial capacity—I hope that is

not resented by the Chairman—I have been trying my best to bring about some understanding between them, and it is also true that these efforts have not succeeded. The Chairman has taken a strictly legal point of view because, under the Press Council Act, there was a committee consisting of the Chief Justice of India, the Chairman, and a nominee of the President. It is this committee who decide the names. Now to these names the Federation of Working Journalists have taken certain objections. I tried my best twice to meet the situation, but the dispute still subsists.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I am a working journalist.

SHRI A. D. MANI : I am a journalist also.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : But Mr. Mani is a journalist of reaction; I am a journalist of progress.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS : I am also a journalist of progress. Now my question, Sir. It is astonishing that even when this question has been there, the Minister has not prepared himself for the probable supplementaries after inquiring from the Press Council. The way the Press Council has started working specially because of the obstinacy of the Chairman, he has only earned ill-will among even responsible quarters. May I know, Sir, whether the Chairman is trying to create a post of Vice-Chairman to give some berth to one of his friends and whether the workload of the Press Council Chairman has become so much that such a post is justifiable in the present circumstances?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : I do not agree with my friend that I am not prepared for the supplementaries so far as the question is concerned; it is not fair. I am prepared for the supplementaries so far as the question is concerned, so far as the other information is concerned. My friend ought to realise that this is an autonomous body, and if I make any inquiries more than what is permitted under the Act, I will be in difficulty again in the House. Therefore, if you ask me I will make inquiries.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : On a point of order, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I would discourage points of order during question time.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : Sir, the hon. Minister repeatedly stated that he would make enquiries as soon as this House orders him to do so. Sir, we can only ask him questions and that we are doing. Will you please order him to come prepared with all the facts next Tuesday?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : The Chairman of the Press Council is the nominee of the Chief Justice of India and then the Chairman and the Chief Justice and another person nominate 23 out of the 26 members of the Press Council. Is this the fact? That is what I want to know.

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Sir, I think I may read out the relevant provision from the Act itself :

“The members shall be nominated by the Chairman thereof and save as aforesaid, all the other members referred to in sub-section (3) shall be nominated by a Committee consisting of the Chief Justice of India, the Chairman of the Council, and a person to be appointed by the President of India; and in making any such nomination the Committee shall pay due regard to the consideration that not more than one person interested in any newspapers” etc.

SHRI A. D. MANI : May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that the Press Council is not working because the profession has not taken the Council seriously? The Press Council Act was passed when the Prime Minister was the Minister of Information and Broadcasting and we had all high hopes of the Press Council. But I am told that one case that has come up is that of a Member of the other House who is editing a journal in Bombay and he has been hauled up before the Press Council for some cartoon. Is it a fact that the Press Council is not receiving any cooperation from the journalists? If so, will the Government come forward with a measure to repeal the Act and for this will the cooperation of the profession be sought, instead of doing it by a statute of Parliament?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : I thought that the recommendation of the Federation of Working Journalists would be considered by the Executive Committee of the Press Council and if I get the considered recommendations of the Executive Committee of the Press Council

then it would be easier for me to come before the House with an amendment of the Act. If *suo motu* I come with an amendment it is likely to be misunderstood. That is why I am grateful to Shri Ganga Sharanji.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : You could dismiss the Haryana Ministry *suo motu* and you can't do anything here?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Why mix up the Haryana question with the Press Council? I am grateful, as I was about to say, to Shri Ganga Sharanji for continuing at my request.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH : Sir, is it a fact that the Chairman of the Press Council had asked the Government that he may be nominated as a Member of the Rajya Sabha? Is it a fact that these 23 nominees on the Press Council are a packed body subservient to the Government and that it is working not for safeguarding the independence of the press in India but for safeguarding the dependence of the press on the Government?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : That is an entirely unjustifiable allegation because the 23 members to be nominated to this Council are nominated by a Committee consisting of the Chief Justice of India, the Chairman of the Council and a person to be appointed by the President of India. Therefore you cannot say that they are a packed body. Also 13 members among them will be from working journalists, 6 will be from persons who own or carry on the business of the management of papers, 3 will be from persons having special knowledge or experience in the field of education, science and so on, and 3 others of whom 2 will be from among Members of the Lok Sabha and one from the Members of the Rajya Sabha. Therefore, I say this is an entirely unjustifiable allegation.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH : What about my other question. Did the Chairman of the Council want to be a Member of the Rajya Sabha?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Officially no such intimation has come to me.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA : May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Press Council Act was passed after a great deal of deliberation by the House,

and by the Government? Is it not a fact that the profession itself desired that people holding high judicial positions should be associated with it? Is it not a fact that the present Chairman of the Press Council resigned a substantive post of the Judge of Supreme Court and then took up this work? He was a Judge of the Supreme Court. Not only is he himself eminent, he is eminent even in his parentage, his father being Shri Mudholkar who was once President of the Indian National Congress. Now he was a Judge of the Supreme Court and he was nominated by the President. May I know, if they are facing trouble, is it not likely that it is because unlike politicians they are not everything to everybody, in conducting the affairs of the Press Council? Why should the hon. Minister try to be apologetic? Is there any justification for any amendment of the law? If these three highly placed persons are facing trouble then it must be due to something in the other party due to their behaving unreasonably.

SHRI K. K. SHAH : I am very sorry to say that my hon. friend is not justified in making that remark that the attitude of the Minister was apologetic. He ought to know the facts better. I regret having to say that. If he remembers the facts he will also see that my attitude is absolutely just as it ought to be, and in the circumstances I could not have taken up any other attitude. I do agree that Shri Mudholkar was a very eminent Judge of the Supreme Court. I have no quarrel with him and no misunderstanding has developed with him. On the contrary he has appreciated my attitude very much.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : Mr. Chairman, the hon. Minister has just stated that after getting a direction from the House he will enquire into certain matters. But certain facts must be in his possession and those facts have been indicated in the question itself. Is it a fact that this Chairman of the Press Council who is a very qualified and distinguished person has asked for immunity from parliamentary control on financial matters of the Council? That fact must be in the possession of the hon. Minister. The other question is the one raised by Shri Krishan Kant, that a prominent person like Shri Chalapathi Rao had refused to serve on this Council. Is this a fact? Is this fact in the possession of the hon. Minister? Also if Shri Ganga Sharanji

has sent in his resignation, he must have also sent a copy of his resignation letter to the hon. Minister. What are the facts that he has stated in his letter of resignation? And what are the facts in the refusal letter of Shri Chalapathi Rao? These facts should be in the possession of the hon. Minister and so he should tell us.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: I will read out the letter of the Chairman. He has not officially sent to us any communication about financial control. What he said in a press statement is this. This has appeared in "Vidura" of November, 1966 :

"Unfortunately its sole financial source is the Government and the grant is to come not from Parliament but from the Government. This leaves a wide scope for interference and activities contemplated and schemes proposed by the Council which would involve expenditure of money have, in fact, to be approved by the Government, which in actual practice would mean the approval by departmental officials. This is not a happy prospect."

This is what he has said. So far as the other question is concerned, it is true that Mr. Chalapathi Rao either refused to serve on the Council or resigned after he was nominated. That is also true.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : What was stated in his letter of refusal? That is what I want to know, as also what Shri Ganga Sharanji has written in his letter of resignation.

SHRI K. K. SHAH : May I tell Shri Chandra Shekhar that resignations do not come to us? They go to the Chairman and no copy is sent to me

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : But is the hon. Minister aware of it or not?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : I am aware of it.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : Are we to take it that you have not received any copy of the letter?

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY : Now, it is very clear that the Chairman is behaving like a despot in the running of this Council. I want to know whether the Federation of Working Journalists has made a representation to

the Minister about the attitude of the Chairman and may I also know that in matters of finance several irregularities have come to the notice of the Minister?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Sir, a representation has been made by the Federation of Working Journalists and it has been forwarded to the Chairman of the Press Council. So far as the irregularities are concerned, the accounts are audited and they have been placed on the Table of the House.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : Mr. Chairman, while appreciating the cautious approach of the hon. Minister, when the hon. Minister is now seized of several facts and when it is the desire of this House that he should reveal those facts, may I know from the hon. Minister what are the reasons given by Ganga Sharan Babu for his resignation, the reasons for its rejection and also why Mr. Chalapathi Rao did not accept the offer. Secondly, now that the hon. Shri Ganga Sharan Sinha will be making a statement on the basis of the various questions put to the hon. Minister, I would appeal that the hon. Minister also should place on the Table of the House a statement and then this matter should be discussed for two hours. When this Press Council Act came into force it was the desire of all of us that it should be an autonomous body, that it should function independently and not according to the whims of any individual; whether he is a Justice or whether he belongs to the Supreme Court or he belongs to any other category, he shall have to behave in a just and reasonable manner and he has to render justice. If persons of that category are not in a position to do that, then the Government will have to think of some other ways. In this connection may I know from the hon. Minister whether he is prepared to make a detailed statement on the floor of the House?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : As I have indicated in the House, after my hon. friend, Ganga Sharan Babu, makes a statement I will get the facts and place them here.

श्री जगत नारायण : मे वजीर साहब से जानना चाहता हूँ, जिस प्रेस काउन्सिल के मुतालिक पन्द्रह बीस मिनट इस हाउस में बहस होती रही है, उस प्रेस काउन्सिल पर अब तक किन्ना रूपया खर्च हुआ है ? मेर

दूसरा सवाल यह है कि क्या इस प्रेस काउंसिल ने अपनी कोई इंटरिम रिपोर्ट अपने काम की बाबत सबमिट की है और अगर नहीं की तो क्या वजीर साहब उसको मंगा कर हाउस की टेबल पर रखेंगे ?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : So far as the expenses are concerned, the grants are indicated in every Budget but if my hon. friend wants particulars about the amount of the grants I will place them.

श्री जगत नारायण : मेरे दूसरे सवाल का जबाब नहीं आया ।

SHRI K. K. SHAH : The Report has been placed on the Table of the House.

MIGRATION OF MINORITY COMMUNITY
FROM EAST PAKISTAN INTO ASSAM

***332. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH :** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that more people belonging to the minority community entered Assam from East Pakistan in 1967 as compared to 1966;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what are the facilities provided by the Government of India to these refugees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT) :
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The reasons for this unusual influx are : economic discrimination in East Pakistan, against these minorities, usurpation of their moveable and immoveable properties by members of the majority community, a feeling of insecurity among them, criminal acts and lack of adequate protection from the authorities.

(c) The migrants are provided relief and rehabilitation assistance such as shelter, cash doles, clothing and other items of relief.

SHRI R. S. KHANDEKAR : The hon. Minister has said 'yes' in reply to part (a) of the question. I would like to ask the hon. Minister how many Muslims have come from Pakistan to Assam and whether it has not unbalan-

ced the whole economy of Assam and what methods are being adopted by our Government to check this infiltration of Muslims. If the minorities come they are welcome in this country. I have been to Assam recently and there were reports that a large number of Muslims are entering Assam by various means and the entire border has become rather very live and very unsafe. There is a sort of agitation there. What methods does the Government propose to adopt to stop this infiltration of Muslims into Assam?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : So far as the infiltrators coming into Assam are concerned they come without any legal passports. For example in 1967 up till October—we can give information only about those who are caught and detected—1012 persons have been detected. Further details if I have notice I can give but at the moment I do not have details.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Govinda Reddy.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY : Some time ago the Home Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am sorry I called you by mistake. I meant to call Mr. Sri Rama Reddy.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY : But I also want to put a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let him ask first.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY : It is now an admitted fact that a large number of minorities from Pakistan have been migrating to this country for various reasons. Some of the reasons mentioned by the Minister are that there is no security for the minorities in East Pakistan, that their economic condition has been deteriorating, that there is no security of their moveable or immoveable property, that there is no safety for the life of the people there and so on. I would like to know in these circumstances whether it is not a fact that a grave situation has arisen and what does the Government propose to do to see that natural justice is done to these minorities. We have been behaving differently, we have been showing every consideration to the minorities here, and if Pakistan is not prepared to act likewise serious steps have got to be taken and I would like to know what steps are being taken by the Government in this regard.