

RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, 30th April 1958

The House met at eleven of the clock, MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

INDO-PAKISTAN MUSHAIRA BROADCAST OVER A.I.R., DELHI

*110. DR. R. B. GOUR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indo-Pakistan Mushaira of the 1st March, 1958, was broadcast over the Delhi Station of the All India Radio;

(b) whether any poems recited at the Mushaira were excluded from the broadcast; and

(c) if so, for what reasons?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI G. RAJAGOPALAN): (a) to (c). Owing to a heavy downpour on the evening of the 1st March 1958, resulting in a breakdown of the technical arrangements for the recording of the Mushaira referred to by the hon. Member, it was not possible to record some of the poems recited in the Mushaira. These recitations did not therefore find a place in the recordings broadcast on the following two days. There was no intentional exclusion of any poems recited in the Mushaira from the broadcast. However, I would like to make it clear that it is not possible for the All India Radio to guarantee either that any relay of such functions will cover the entire proceedings or will broadcast all the recitations. A.I.R. reserves the right to broadcast parts it considers suitable or convenient.

DR. R. B. GOUR: May I know, Sir, if the breakdown was there only

in specific cases and that only the three poems of the three poets Shri Makhdoom Mohiuddin, Shri Ali Sardar Jafari and Shri Kaifi Azami could not be broadcast. Then in the latter part of the answer he says that they can discriminate and they can omit some of the poems. Now is it a fact that they wanted to omit these poems?

SHRI G. RAJAGOPALAN: As a matter of fact the recitations of these three persons whom he mentioned were to be in the evening and the breakdown of the transmission machinery was also in the evening because of a downpour. We have said that the omission of the poems was not intentional. As to the right of the A.I.R. to say what to broadcast and what not to broadcast, that is a different question.

DR. R. B. GOUR: The entire Mushaira was in the evening and these three poets were to recite their poems along with the other poets.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: As has already been said, it is not possible for us to guarantee that we will relay any function in its entirety. If in fact we accept that position that we will relay any function in its entirety it can only be in respect of functions which are of very short duration, and in respect of those functions which take quite a long period we will have to drop them altogether to escape the charge of discrimination in case we broadcast only parts of such functions. Secondly we have to reserve the right to ourselves because we have sometimes to abbreviate relays of functions and we have to pick and choose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You abbreviate your own speeches.

DR. R. B. GOUR: Then in that case will they frankly say that they excluded the three poets and that the downpour had nothing to do with it?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Yes, exclude or include poems as we consider it suitable or convenient.

DR. R. B. GOUR: Is it a fact that Shri Makhdoom Mohiuddin is being discriminated against because the Kashmir Station of the All India Radio sent a wire to Hyderabad concerning Shri Makhdoom Mohiuddin and yet so far no reply has been sent?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Sir, I am not prepared to answer questions regarding any particular person. If the hon. Member has got anything in particular to ask, let him put a separate question.

DR. R. B. GOUR: This person is included in the excluded list of poets whose poem recited at the Mushaira was not broadcast?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is included in the excluded list?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: As a matter of fact we exclude not on the basis on which the hon. Member considers it to be so, but on some other basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Keskar's answer is that this omission was due to a downpour; but on general grounds he affirms that the A.I.R. has the right, because it cannot broadcast the whole thing, to delete some and broadcast some.

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO: Did the downpour synchronise with the recitation of these poets whose poems, because of the downpour and the consequent breakdown of the arrangements for recording them, could not be recorded at the time?

SHRI G. RAJAGOPALAN: May I add, Sir, that attempts were made to contact some of the poets whose poems could not be recorded because of the breakdown. We made an

attempt to contact them but theirs could not be included in the broadcast because they were not available for recording the matter, and they had other programmes.

DR. R. B. GOUR: May I draw the attention of the hon. Minister to this that when our poet went to get his poem recorded the authorities said that they had not got the information from Hyderabad? (*Interruptions*)

(No reply)

SHRI D. A. MIRZA: May I know, Sir, whether any objectionable poems were recited in the Mushaira?

DR. R. B. GOUR: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member wants to know whether any poems were regarded as objectionable.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Sir, I cannot say that; I will have to go through the poems.

SHRI D. A. MIRZA: May I know the contents of the poems that were recited?

(No reply)

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO: Is it because they were poets with progressive ideas that their poems were deliberately excluded?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: The hon. Member is at liberty to draw any conclusions he likes. I have explained, Sir, that generally we do it on the basis of merit. Now if a particular poet is excluded and the hon. Member likes that particular poet, well, he can say that we have discriminated against him. I cannot do anything about it.

SHRI RAGHAVENDRA RAO: Was there anyone among them who was a Communist?

SHRI G. RAJAGOPALAN: We have no information now.