

[Mr. Deputy Chairman.] 3

P.M.

15. Discussion on the Rules relating to the Initial Constitution of Indian Foreign Service, Branch 'B'. 2 hrs.
16. Motion for modification of the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Rules. 1 hr.
17. General discussion on the resolution regarding Second Five Year Plan. 15 hrs.
18. Discussion on the Report by D:- Paul H. Appleby on re-examination of India's Administrative System with special reference to Administration of Government's industrial and commercial enterprises. 4 hrs.

In order to be able to complete this programme the Committee has also recommended that:—

(i) the present session of the Rajya Sabha should be extended up to September 13, 1956;

(ii) the House should dispense with the lunch recess during the sittings up to the 1st September, 1956; and

(iii) the House should sit on two Saturdays, namely, the 25th August and 1st September, 1956.

The Committee has also recommended that there should be no sitting on Tuesday, August 21, 1956, on account of Raksha Bandhan.

The Committee has further recommended that August 17, 1956, which had been allotted for Private Members' Resolutions should be converted into a day for official business and August 31 should be allotted for Private Members' Resolutions in lieu thereof.

Dr. Keskar.

THE NEWSPAPER (PRICE AND PAGE) BILL, 1956

THE MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (DR.

B. V. KESKAR) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the regulation of the prices charged for newspapers in relation to their pages and of matters connected therewith for the purpose of preventing unfair competition among newspapers so that

newspapers may have fuller opportunities of freedom of expression be taken into consideration."

This Bill has been introduced in this House in pursuance of the recommendations of the Press Commission. Hon. Members might remember that the Commission has devoted some part of its observations to this question of having a schedule which will regulate the price of newspapers according to the pages that they contain. Some of the points that the Commission have made—and with your permission I should like to refer to them—are relevant here and might help hon. Members in considering the Bill more carefully and also examining the grounds on which this recommendation has been so emphatically made by the Press Commission. The Commission says in para 205 that in the present newspaper industry of this country "Papers of long standing which have been able to build up a large and stable volume of advertisement revenue are in a very advantageous position as compared to others who have just entered the field. It is true that such economic advantages and handicaps exist in a number of industries but their presence in the newspaper is not, in our opinion, conducive to the even and healthy development of the press. Newspapers serve as media for the free exchange of information and of ideas. The proper functioning of democracy requires that every individual should have equal opportunity, in so far as this can be achieved, to put forward his opinions."

The Commission further on in paragraph 206 also says with regard to their proposal for price-page schedules: "We have made it clear that it is not our intention that the amount of news and views that are placed before the public should be restricted in any way either by fixing very high prices or by setting a maximum limit on the consumption of paper."

Further on in paragraph 208 they continue and say: "An excessive number of pages in each issue would have the effect of reducing the price of the paper to the reader, and is therefore used by the publisher as a means of competing with other papers."

I have just given a few extracts from the Commission's report in order to explain the underlying idea of the Commission. The main aim of the Commission's recommendation is to see that a

fair price is guaranteed to independent small papers and thus enable them to resist competition from bigger and richer papers. It is also to protect such papers against unfair price competition such as exists in other industrial commodities like cornering, price-cutting, etc. It is the Commission's contention that though such practices might be tolerated within a certain limit in other industries, it should not be so in the press industry where we have the medium of expression of public opinion and where cornering by a person or a group of persons of this medium would mean the passing of this medium into the hands of a few persons and their monopolising the medium of public opinion and throttling the expression of opinion by others who would like to place their views before the public. This, in their opinion, would be practically amounting to a denial of the freedom of expression and it is in that light that they have made this recommendation. The Commission have said that they have examined many schemes as to how it would be possible to ensure the largest amount of freedom of expression and they felt that this was probably one of the most effective ways by which we can ensure freedom of expression. I would like here to mention that when the Commission's report came out the Government had discussions regarding these recommendations; and the recommendation regarding price-page schedules was also one of those important recommendations which were discussed with a number of organisations which were concerned with the newspaper industry. The All India Newspaper Editors Conference, the Indian Federation of Working Journalists, the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society, the Indian Language Newspapers' Association and also a large number of individual newspaper editors and proprietors were consulted. This discussion took place many times and the pros and cons of this question were thoroughly discussed. We found that the majority of the members—and when I say the members I mean the proprietors in the press—were very much in favour of some such legislation and restriction. No doubt some of the bigger papers were against it. But that was to be expected. Afterwards came the debate in Parliament on the Press Commission's Report, and Government found that in the discussion in both the Houses there was a very strong opinion, I would say a strong majority opinion, that some such legislation on the lines of the recommendations of

I the Press Commission should be undertaken by the Government. Here I would like to mention one or two things regarding the question of the price-page schedule and the pros and cons of the advantages or disadvantages of a schedule. The points in favour of the schedule might be considered briefly. It will tend to equalise competition and also prevent the emergence of monopolies. It will also, secondly, relax the control of big advertising interests on newspapers, and in that sense generally make them more independent. Thirdly, the creation of monopolies and the cornering of large numbers of page papers by one or two or three groups impinges on the fundamental right of freedom of expression, and by trying to restrict such practices we will in reality be giving greater scope for freedom of expression than we can now. These were the main things which we had in view in the discussions with the newspaper interests. However, in discussing the details of the price-page schedule, a number of points cropped up and we had also before us all the arguments that could be put forward against the schedule. We certainly carefully considered all of them. One of the points which was brought forward was that this was something quite new and was therefore likely to create a very unfavourable press and unfavourable reactions regarding our country in the international world. It might be even spread abroad that India is restricting the freedom of the Press. Now, regarding this point, I do not think it will be correct to say that no such restriction exists. Even today, and formerly on a greater scale, in Great Britain the price-page schedule existed and exists. No doubt the object of it might be quite different. The object is to give a more equitable distribution of newsprint, but the control by a statutory corporation of the distribution of newsprint only to papers if they follow certain price-page regulations is there and has been functioning for the last fifteen years or more. In this country during the war and immediately after we had the price-page schedule for a number of years, and therefore it would not be right to say that such a thing has never been heard of or that it is something quite new.

The other point that has been made regarding adverse propaganda against our country is in my opinion a little exaggerated. Conditions in all the coun-

[Dr. B. V. Kesar.]

tries are not the same, and in the context of the situation here and the peculiar conditions prevailing in our newspaper industry, I do not think that any such step can be considered to be restricting the freedom of the Press. As you know, the conditions in our newspaper industry have during the last few years become worse and worse. There have been a number of good and established papers closing down. We are having a number of new papers and in many areas, more especially in regional languages, we see the phenomenon of newspapers financed by what I would say opulent financiers and on a large scale trying to build themselves up not by what has been up till then the considered and the traditional way of newspaper establishment—that is, by giving the best of news and views to the public and presenting it in the most attractive manner—but rather by things which are more reminiscent of other markets, which mean sudden price-cutting and giving out the sensational type of news and trying to undermine the financial position of the opponent and ultimately bringing him down. Once he is brought down and the victor is left in the field, he can again revert whenever he likes to the old price of the paper. This has been going on in a number of important languages, and we have the spectacle of a few very good and very well known and respected papers completely closing down.

The other point which has been raised against this is mainly with regard to the apprehension that some papers have expressed that this might harm the business in the sense that any such schedule might be so rigid and inelastic that it might not be responsive to the trends in the sale of papers, in the price of newsprint and many other matters connected with the newspaper industry. I think that apprehension, valid though it might be, need not be there, because, as hon. Members might see, in the legislation proposed, the schedule will be fixed in consultation with the interests concerned and after taking fully into consideration all the relevant facts that are put before the Government. There need not be any fear that any arbitrary or sudden action will be taken with complete disregard of the interests of the various sections of the newspaper industry.

What I said, Sir, regarding the industry as a whole applies more especially to our Indian language newspaper industry. Conditions in the English Press

in our country are not so bad. Most of the papers are well established, they have got good resources, with a few exceptions here and there. But the Press in our various regional languages is not at all in the same happy position, and more especially at a time when we expect the regional languages to play their part, when we are going to switch gradually from English to the regional languages, and the inter-provincial language, the National Language—this is coming in the way of a proper development of the Press in all these regions; and it is here that, unless some help is given, it is possible that the growth of a good and independent Press might be retarded, and retarded to such an extent that it will be difficult to re-establish it on a sound basis for a long time to come. There is one thing regarding this which we must bear in mind. In foreign countries and newspapers generally build themselves on advertisements and circulation both of which play a very important part; but the conditions in our country cannot be said to be similar or very happy. First of all, the advertisement revenue in our country is not very big if we compare it with some foreign countries. Secondly, a large part of that revenue is monopolised by the English press, and very little of it goes to the regional language papers. The result is that the language press or the regional press is at present living from hand to mouth.....

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): Not "living from hand to mouth", but the staff is underbed.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Well, I do not see that there is much difference. The conditions of the staff are bad, the papers have not got any reserves, and therefore it is difficult for us to say if a particular paper might go on or might stop. It is very difficult to predict anything about any paper's future. No doubt there might be some papers here and there in a very sound position but their number is extremely small. So, what I want to submit is this that the conditions of our newspaper industry are not such that we can blindly follow something which has been prevailing in some other country. We will have to tackle this question in our own way. And it is for that reason that the Press Commission itself has recommended a new approach to this question, and this measure is in the form of trying to protect smaller papers, so that by undercutting and by other methods the bigger papers will not be able to beat them. It is possible, of course, for the bigger papers

even then to beat them by better news, a better get up and an attractive appearance. Of course, everybody is free to buy any paper that he likes.

Sir, I do not want to say much regarding the provisions incorporated in this Bill, which are only enabling provisions. This Bill is meant to give power to the Government to fix a schedule in consultation with the interests concerned from time to time. That is, in brief, the object of this Bill. Sir, the Government have given their very careful thought to this question and the arguments which prompted the Government first of all were that Parliament and a large majority of Members felt very strongly that this measure would help the poorer sections of the press and it would protect them against any unfair competition. Over and above this, the Government also felt that the advantages of such a schedule were many. First of all, it is quite likely that it would mitigate the effects of fierce competition and cut-throat competition which might be taking place amongst the various newspapers. There is also the other advantage that is possible, and it is that it might help in building up the standard and economy of newspapers in general, because as things are prevailing at this moment, the regional language papers are not sure about what they might have to do tomorrow. If a competing paper cuts its price suddenly, then they have to throw overboard all their improvement plans that might have been prepared, and they will have to reduce the price also to the same level. Otherwise their sales will be adversely affected. Today, a large number of papers do not want to risk their money on any long-term plan for the improvement of their service to the public, and any relief that they are given in this direction will certainly help them in improving their standard. They can adopt the necessary measures for improving their get up, their articles and their service to the public, and thus they can make a greater and greater appeal to the public. •

All these arguments and the opinions expressed in Parliament as well as in the press inclined the Government to accept this recommendation. But I might confess that though I have personally gone into all the details—I would like afterwards to give a few extracts regarding the functioning of the price-page schedule in other countries and in our country also—the Government has not been 5—12 R. S. 56

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I am able to come to an absolute and definite conclusion about the extent of the advantage that will be gained. There is no sufficient data to judge all these things, because such a thing has not existed. Whatever price-page schedule is there, it is for some other object. Whatever data and material exists, we have studied it, and after a very careful consideration we came to the conclusion that in fairness to the press and in fairness to Parliament, and also considering the Press Commission's Report, we "should try this price-page schedule fairly and squarely. And we will, after the implementation of the schedule, carefully study its effects and we will find out in what measure and how far it is helping the press for which it is being enacted. Any further course of action will depend on the measure of success to be achieved and the direction in which it is achieved. Honourable Members will have observed that there are not given any details in the Bill about the schedule itself. That is not possible, because unless the Government is given any power, it is not proper for the Government to have any discussions with the interests concerned. After the Bill is passed, we propose to call them not once, but frequently, and thrash out the subject before coming to any definite conclusion as to what the schedule should be.

I might however inform the House that before this we had a preliminary meeting with some of the interests concerned regarding the schedule, and that preliminary discussion has helped us to some extent. But naturally we will have to discuss it in more details before any such thing can be attempted.

In conclusion, Sir, I might point out that I had carefully considered the schedules that existed in U. K. and also in our country during the war and after in order to see what effect they had had on the development of the press in England and in our country. Generally speaking, looking at the figures in respect of circulation and income, and other figures of the papers in India, the fluctuation as a result of the schedules has not been very great. On the other hand, a number of papers were helped to establish themselves on a firmer footing during this period. I mean thereby that the papers which formerly were not well-known got some standing, and even today they are flourishing.

(Dr. B. V. Keskar.)

In Great Britain, the papers have been following for the last 10 or 15 years a price-page schedule, and a survey of the circulation and the financial condition of the papers there shows that the circulation of no paper has been affected by there being a restriction like the price-page restriction that we propose here. On the other hand, a number of papers have had phenomenal increases in circulation. Briefly therefore the analysis shows that there was no restriction on circulation on account of such a schedule operating. Even there one or two papers have always been agitating against the schedule, and recently there has been a directive from the U.K. Government that this might be terminated soon. It is interesting to note that the majority of the papers have protested against termination of these restrictions.

I do not want at this stage to say much more. I will certainly take up other points when my hon. friends have had their say. I move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to provide for the regulation of the prices charged for newspapers in relation to their pages and of matters connected therewith for the purpose of preventing unfair competition among newspapers so that newspapers may have fuller opportunities of freedom of expression be taken into consideration."

We have to finish this Bill before the close of the day. I would call upon the hon. Minister to reply at 4-30 P.M. We will have just one hour, 40 minutes on this side and 20 minutes on that side. If the House has no objection, we will sit for half an hour more.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am very glad that the hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting has again remembered the report of the Press Commission and has come before us with the present Bill which we all welcome, notwithstanding some of its failings which we shall point out. It took, if I remember aright, fifteen years to give effect to some of the recommendations of the Rau Committee. I do not know how long it will take for this Government to implement the recommendations of the Press Commission. So far we have had only two enactments, one with regard to the working journalists

and the other with regard to press registration. I am not going to say anything now on how these are working. Anyway, so far we have got only two. This is another instalment. At the same time I take this opportunity to point out that some of the other very vital recommendations of the Press Commission remain yet unimplemented. These are:

- (i) prohibiting other unfair practices such as under-cutting and excess commissions;
- (ii) telescopic tariff rates for advertisements by the government;
- (iii) conversion of the P.T.I. into a Corporation and realignment of its agency tariffs so as to relate it to the circulation, thus providing relief to the smaller papers; and
- (iv) setting up of a Corporation to import newsprint.

These, I believe—and I think everybody will agree—are very important recommendations of the Press Commission and I do not know when the Government will act upon, them with a view to implementing them. It was two years ago that this important report consisting of very important and welcome recommendations was presented before Parliament, and within these two years we have got very little by way of implementation of these recommendations. Well, if there was any report which should have been taken seriously, it is this report of the Press Commission. If there were any recommendations which the Government should have immediately implemented, they were the recommendations of the Press Commission. Yet, we find that the Government has been extremely lukewarm in regard to this matter, and has acted with almost unbecoming slowness. We cannot understand why such a thing has happened.

There is no doubt that this Bill is going to be one of the measures which will to some extent, if properly implemented and if the price is properly fixed, curtail or curb the power of the monopoly press in our country and help the smaller papers, but much will depend on how the price-page schedule is worked out. I do not know with whom the hon. Minister is in consultation or whom he is going to invite for further discussion. I have my fears in this matter. If you discuss too much with the big men, the bosses of the big press, you are likely to be derailed into wrong paths. If you however discuss with the small men,

with the working Journalists and others, may be you will be able to evolve a correct policy with regard to the price of the newspapers in the country. I would like some enlightenment on this matter as to how his mind is working over this question of consultations and discussions.

Then, I do not know exactly what provisions will be made. This is only an empowering Bill. I would like the Government to tell me as to how these powers will be exercised. It is a matter of regret that there is no provision in this Bill laying down a dead line by when the provisions and regulations with regard to price would come into force. I know that the hon. Minister will say that much depends on the discussions, and that he will do it as quickly as possible, but our past experience raises doubts and suspicions in our minds. I wonder whether they are going to come into operation during the life of this Parliament, I mean the other House. This I would like to know from him. I have a suggestion to make that Government should make up its mind on this matter and enforce the prices fixed under this Bill by the 1st October or so. The House is entitled to know the mind of the Government in regard' to this matter.

Then, I would like to say a few words about the importance of this Bill. I was a little surprised to hear the hon. Minister's speech. He does not seem to be convinced of the advantages, after all these discussions, of price restriction on newspapers. It seems to me rather surprising that after all the discussions that have taken place in the country, after all the recommendations that have been made in this valuable report of the Press Commission, and after all the things that the journalists themselves have said—I am not talking about the big bosses—the hon. Minister should be in any doubt about the advantages of a price-page schedule. I would not call him a doubting Thomas, but to some extent his attitude is surprising.

I can tell the hon. Minister from whatever little we know of the press, from whatever little we know of the calculations and the experiences of the working journalists of the country and of the smaller papers that the regulation of the prices and the fixation of a price page schedule properly worked out are an imperative necessity not only for curbing the monopolist tendencies that

are fast developing in the world of Indian journalism or Indian press but also for helping the smaller paper's to grow and for nourishing them. Let there be no mistake about it at this late hour. That is what I would ask the hon. Minister to keep in mind.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, as you know, this business of price as far as the big papers are concerned, has been a weapon for undercutting the prices of the smaller papers, and for ousting them from circulation, for developing what we call a monopoly even in the field of journalism. That is common knowledge and on this I need not dilate much but it is well known that there are certain papers which issue 12 pages for *li annas* and they compete with all the advantages on their side against smaller papers and gradually squeeze them out of circulation altogether. Then there are also papers published from different places which have different pages for the same price. In some places the pages are added and the number of pages is increased with a view to carrying on competition against the smaller papers and taking their place in all the places. But where there is no such competition, the pages are not so many as in this case. We all know this. Sometimes it is made out by them that the pages are given because they convey to the readers much more material but we have known our bulky papers containing very many pages for a cheap price and we know what these papers contain in those pages. First of all, you come across advertisements, column after column filled with advertisements of all kinds, then you find all types of news write-ups and other things which one can easily do without, then sensational stories which bring out the morbid curiosities of the people and similar other things and scandal stories and all these things are published to fill the pages and thereby attract the readers. The mentality behind is preposterous and is something which has got to be checked. This is how we find these papers are running. Therefore it is not at all a case where more pages mean better journalism or more instructive and enlightened material. Thanks to the press barons of our country, more pages have often meant more filth, more crime stories, more sensational news, more political propaganda on the side of reaction and all kinds of things that are not wanted for instruction of our people or for their enlightenment. It is a fact and this is a fact which goes on record and one is

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta.] just to look at the newspaper only to prove it. They are filled with false and obnoxious stories, some of them—I am not saying all of them—but the bulkier the paper, there you will find that the proportion of such news is greater. Therefore on that score, it can never be supported. It is a lie when it is said that more pages are needed in order to convey more reading stuff or good reading stuff to the readers and for their advantage. Nothing of the sort. Again we find the way as to how they manage this. Some papers are there in the country which bring out so many pages in a particular issue whose cost of production is not covered by the price they fix. You will ask, "Why? These are businessmen and why do they do such things? Do you mean to say that they run at a loss?" I say, "Yes, as far as the relation of price to the cost goes they run at a loss but they make up their loss by other means." What are the means? Number one is, they go in for advertisements and collect advertisements and often they are connected with the big advertising houses and then they try to boost the circulation and in order to boost the circulation, again they reduce the price and acquire a monopolist position in the field and thus increase circulation by increasing the volume of circulation.

(*Time bell rings.*) I should like to have a few minutes more. Thus they make up the loss on the costing and all that. As you know, more circulation means more advertisement and this is what we find in respect of some papers. Now you will find in the report of the Press Commission itself, at page 65 it is given—an example—where an eight-page sells at one anna. If it is just sold as waste-paper it makes a profit but by *bona fide* sale it gets less. The calculation is based on 1,000 copies. By *bona fide* sales it would receive Rs. 37|11|- whereas by selling it as waste-paper it would get Rs. 45, thereby making a profit of Rs. 7|5|-. That is how they publish this. They print this, they sell it as waste-paper and the profit made does not go into the accounting that is made for income-tax. It is just pocketed evading income-tax and of course they show increased circulation by selling as waste-paper 10,000 copies of paper. They tell the advertisers that they have so much circulation and get more advertisement and that is how they carry on. This is the trick these people are engaged in and they are certainly to be checked in the interests of

a free and fair press, in the country. Now the position has come to such a point that if in Delhi you want to read a Hindi newspaper you don't have any other alternative but rather to choose a Dalmia or a Birla paper. Such is the freedom of the press today. Now this is the position to which we have been brought as a result of monopolist concentration and by ousting of the smaller papers by the bigger papers in the field.

Then with regard to other weeklies and supplements—there are all kinds of supplements. That is a very important point and I regret that the provision in the Bill is something which tries to evade the recommendations of the Press Commission. When I deal with the amendments, I shall speak on these but I would like the hon. Minister to explain on what grounds he seeks to evade the recommendations of the Press Commission. What kind of supplements are brought out today? Tomorrow you will find many Independence Numbers in your hands and at the breakfast table you will read them. Deeply study them, see how much of these contain important, well-thought-out informative articles and how much of them contain articles inspired by official or certain businessmen or emanating from the Information Department of the Government. I would ask you to go into this matter. Governors write articles and they take one hour to write an article. With big photographs the article is published in the Independence Number Supplements. If you go through the whole thing, the only good thing to look at is the Governor's photograph and Governor of course is often a good-looking person. That is all that you get and the article contains nothing or it is trash. Such things happen. We have the commercial supplements. Now they have become too many and you find the Statesman and other papers issuing very frequently these commercial supplements. What do they contain? They contain surely advertisements, articles written with the object of boosting certain articles or advancing the cause of certain business or commercial firms. All these articles bear big titles and perhaps big names also as authors but when everything is said and done, you find that they are nothing more or nothing less than mere advertisements. Now I would ask, why this should go on? Why should we give certain benefits to the newspaper such as postal facilities and others? So that the public gets the benefit of them in the final analysis, we give. Why should we help such supplements being brought

out ? Here you will find the observations of the Press Commission with regard to this matter helpful. On page 97 of their Report they say :

"We agree with the view of advertising agencies that such supplements offer publicity in commensurate with the expenditure involved and has benefited only the newspapers. We, therefore, feel that the supplements of the commercial type should be discouraged."

But I regret to say that the provisions in this Bill would not go much to discourage the bringing out of such unwanted supplements. Therefore, I say that some of the recommendations of the Press Commission have not been fully understood or grasped by the Ministry, or even if they had been, they are not properly implemented and I regret that this thing should have happened.

(Time bell rings.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Time is up, Mr. Gupta.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Finally, Sir, I would like the hon. Minister to tell us when he replies to the debate, exactly when this price-page schedule is going to come into force. We would not like to wait till the next general elections. We would like to have it before the next Parliament meets, if not earlier. On that point I would like to have some kind of an assurance. I had some faith in the hon. Minister and when this report was published, I had a talk with him and I had a feeling that he meant business and that he would be serious with the implementation of these recommendations. But the more time passes, more disappointments come and I do not know who has got the better of his initiative, we or some other people who are interested in scuttling the recommendations of the Commission and carrying on their monopolistic operation in the world of journalism, to the detriment of the newspaper reader, to the detriment of the freedom of the press and to the detriment of everyone who is concerned in the matter.

SHRI SHRIYANS PRASAD JAIN (Bombay): Mr. Deputy Chairman, the hon. Minister, in the statement of objects and reasons attached to this Bill, has said that this measure has been brought forward "mainly to provide the circumstances in which freedom of opinion could be very much more real than it is today by eliminating unfair

competition and equalising opportunities for newspapers especially with smaller resources."

So far as his first argument is concerned, I am prepared to concede it, but when he speaks of equalising opportunities, I am sorry to say that that statement is not very very correct. I feel that every newspaper has got equal opportunities and I do not know how he says that they have not got equal opportunities. I shall be very happy if in his reply to the debate, he will tell us in what way the newspaper do not get equal opportunities.

So far as the object of the Bill is concerned I have every sympathy with it and I also wish that the smaller papers, particularly the Indian languages newspapers, should get support and they should not only be provided with better opportunity, but they should also be provided with help to grow in vigour and vitality. But I am afraid that the measure which has been brought before us is not sufficient and is not enough to give us the desired result. As you know, Sir, and as the hon. Minister said in his speech, price-page schedule was in force in India during the war and after the war too, though it was for a different object. The reason then was the scarcity of newsprint and for that reason the price-page schedule had to be introduced. But we should see now whether this will help the smaller papers, especially the Indian language papers to stand on their own legs. My enquiries and my investigations show that during those times when price-page schedule was in force the smaller papers and the Indian language papers could not thrive to the extent it was expected of them. Therefore, I would like to emphasise that this price-page schedule will not give these papers the strength and vigour that is needed and for that something else will have to be done. I would suggest that the remedy should be much more than what is prescribed in this Bill. If the Government is really interested and if they do not want to impart merely lip sympathy to these small papers, if they want to bring them up, especially the Indian language papers and to help them to stand on their own legs, then I have four or five suggestions which I would like to be considered.

First of all I would suggest that copies of the Indian language papers or the smaller papers should be bought by the Government to some extent and distributed in their own offices and in their

[Shri Shriyans Prasad Jain.]

libraries and also, probably to the foreign embassies, so that these smaller papers might get encouragement and it might also be felt by the public that these papers have got the backing of the Government.

Secondly, there is this question of advertisement. No paper can stand on its own legs merely on the price which it gets by the sale of its copies. The main source of income of any paper is the advertisement and if that advertisement is not forthcoming, then however efficient and good the paper might be, it cannot stand on its own legs. Therefore, my suggestion to the Government is that they should come forward and distribute more advertisement to these smaller language papers. They should distribute the advertisement not merely on the basis of circulation, but give them a little more than what they deserve. Unless that is done, the Government cannot expect these small papers and the Indian language papers to thrive and prosper.

My third suggestion is that the provisions of the Indian Postal Act may not be made applicable or at least may be relaxed in the case of the newspapers.

PROF. G. RANGA (Andhra): Which Act?

SHRI SHRIYANS PRASAD JAIN: The Indian Postal Act. You know that Act provides that if the advertisement is more than 50 per cent, then it will not be treated as a newspaper. So my submission is that if they really want to patronise these papers, this condition about 50 per cent, advertisement should be relaxed so far as the smaller papers or the Indian language papers are concerned and the Indian Postal Act may not be applicable to them.

My fourth suggestion is that the provisions of the Working Journalists Act may be relaxed by agreement in the case of these newspapers. There is a big load on these newspapers and they are not able to function because of the provisions of that Act. If there is some relaxation of that Act, I feel these papers will be able to show better results. As you may know, Sir, recently a Wage Board Commission has been formed and that body will go into the question of the wages of the newspaper establishments. I do welcome this move, so far as the smaller papers are concerned. In their case there should be a wage board and

the wages should be fixed according to its recommendations. But so far as the smaller papers are concerned, there should be some relaxation and the wages in their case should be recommended a little less than what is recommended in the case of the bigger newspapers.

If these measures are taken, I am sure most of the difficulties and much of the hardship that are being experienced by the smaller papers would be very much removed.

When we are talking about these smaller newspapers or the Indian language papers, we should not lose sight of the reader, for he is also very much concerned with this matter.

4 P.M.

The reader is a very important factor and when the price is increased, as it is bound to be increased because of this Bill, then the circulation of the paper will go down. If we really want to build up public opinion in the country, if we want that there should be free and fair criticism then we should see that the circulation is in no way lessened. I am convinced that if there is any increase in the price of the paper, then the circulation is bound to go down. This is my experience and if there is any doubt about this, the statistics may be had from the newspaper offices.

It has been said that there is unfair competition between the big and small newspapers. In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that apart from the price factor to which he drew attention, there is no unfair competition. The fields covered by smaller papers are different. So far as the English and other big newspapers are concerned, they are located in the big cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and the field of the language papers are entirely different and they are in the mofussil areas. The readership is also different. My considered opinion is that there is no unfair competition. The readership of the English newspaper is totally different from the readership of the language papers.

I now come to the provisions of the Bill. Government has taken power for a period of five years. I am not in favour of giving this power to Government for five years. Government may come up before the Parliament after one

or two years in the light of their experience and place their views before the Parliament and Parliament can, if it thinks that this price-page schedule is working satisfactorily and properly, extend the time but in the first instance, to give this power for a period of five years is rather long and I would request the hon. Minister to reduce this period to two or three years.

Clause 3 says, ".....it is necessary or expedient so to do, the Central Government may, from time to time, by notification in the Official Gazette, make an order providing for the regulation of the prices charged for newspapers in relation to their maximum or minimum number of pages, sizes or areas and for the space to be allotted for advertising matter in relation to other matters therein." Further on, it says that the order made under this clause may be in relation to newspapers generally or in relation to any class of newspapers. My submission is that while Government may be anxious to fix the minimum prices, I do not understand the reason why maximum prices should be fixed. If a particular newspaper gives more readable matter, publishes more articles and present it in a better form, why should there be a bar to its being sold at a rate which they consider proper?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: That is regard-has been fixed. Where is it fixed? I am sorry to interrupt, but where is the maximum fixed?

SHRI SHRIYANS PRASAD JAIN: It is said, "... by notification ... make an order providing for the regulation of the prices charges for news papers in relation to their maximum or minimum"

DR. B. V. KESKAR: That is regarding the number of pages.

SHRI SHRIYANS PRASAD JAIN: All right. I suggest that there should be uniform rates through India. There should not be different rates for different class of papers. If such a difference were allowed to creep in, it would be discrimination between one paper and another and it will not help in the building up of healthy traditions. Whether it is the class of paper, whether it is the space for advertisement or whatever it is, there should be one uniform policy throughout India. *

Lastly, I would suggest this for the serious consideration of the hon. Minister. It has been said that the Central Government will consult the association of publishers whose interests are likely to be affected. In these things, individual discussions should not take place; there should be a sort of a permanent advisory body and its services should be called in whenever necessary. This body should have representation on it of both big and small newspapers. It may be that fine paper may be affected but then we do not know what the effects of such an action may be on the other papers. Instead of having individual discussions with individual newspapers, I think it is better to have a permanent advisory body in which the small as well as the big newspapers may be represented.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU (Uttar Pradesh) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, I welcome the purpose underlying this Bill which is to give protection to the smaller newspapers and to enable them to express their views with freedom. It is in the interests of the country that the smaller newspapers should be enabled to live and to carry on their purpose of educating public opinion without undue competition from the larger newspapers but, in order to achieve this purpose, we should not proceed in such a way as virtually to penalise the good newspapers or the better class of newspapers "for their excellence. Now, the Bill authorises Government to make an order providing for the regulation of the prices charged for newspapers in relation to their maximum or minimum number of pages, sizes or areas and for the space to be allotted for advertising matter in relation to other matters therein. I admit that this is in accordance with the recommendations of the Press Commission but I do not think that the Government will be able to devise any way of equalising the opportunities possessed by the bigger and the smaller newspapers of securing advertisements. The ability of a newspaper to secure advertisements will depend largely on the number of its subscribers and on the class of people amongst whom it circulates. Not all advertisements appeal equally to all classes of readers. There may be some kinds of advertisements, as admitted by the Press Commission, which appeal only to certain classes of society and it is obvious that newspapers circulating among people of this class will have an advantage over other newspapers in respect of advertisement revenue. I have given this illustration only

[Shri H. N. Kunzru.]

in order to show the need for keeping the regulations and orders flexible. Any order which applies in all circumstances equally to all newspapers will not, I think, be useful for the purpose of promoting the economy or the efficiency of the newspapers.

Another point to which I should like to draw attention of the House is that while by making the advertisement revenue one of the factors on which the* price of a newspaper should depend, you may strengthen the economy of the smaller papers, you cannot improve the quality of the comments on the news, which makes newspapers generally worth reading to the public at large.

SHRI J. S. BISHT (Uttar Pradesh): With better economy better editors will come in.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : That is true theoretically, but in actual practice we know that there are some newspapers published in the Indian languages which, though having a good circulation, do not maintain particularly a high standard. We cannot say that either in respect of the publication of news or in respect of their comments on these news they set a high standard before the public. The English newspapers are generally at an advantage in this respect than the Indian language newspapers and unless the Indian language newspapers have editors of the requisite education and experience, you cannot, by any means, equalise the chances, of success of the two kinds of newspapers I have referred to. I should very much like all our newspapers and particularly our daily newspapers to be of a good quality but, things being what they are, I think we ought not to proceed in a dogmatic way and lay down rules which, without being of any advantage to the newspaper-reading public, would place the better class of newspapers at a disadvantage as compared with other newspapers which do not maintain the necessary standard of efficiency. I feel, Sir, that at this stage a great deal of care should be exercised in framing the Orders so that, while giving legitimate protection to the smaller newspapers, an atmosphere may not be created which would discourage talent and foster inefficiency.

My third point, Sir, relates to what fell from the hon. Minister in regard to the inability of the Government to make up its mind with regard to the Orders that should be made in order to secure

the purpose that this Bill has in view. Now Government have already waited for about a year since the Report of the Press Commission was discussed in this House. If they have not been able during this period to examine the matter carefully, I think nothing would have been lost had they waited for a few weeks or even for a few months more in order to gain more knowledge and place before us their views in a more definite form. What this Bill seeks to do is merely to empower Government to make such orders, as it considers necessary, for the purposes mentioned in the Bill, and it is stated, Sir, in the Memorandum regarding Delegated Legislation that "the delegation of legislative power is of a normal character." Sir, I beg to differ from the view expressed in the Memorandum on Delegated Legislation. There are many Acts which empower the authorities to make rules and regulations for certain purposes, but those rules and regulations relate to purposes about which the Government have definite ideas and of which the Act itself is a sufficiently clear indication. Here the Bill gives no indication whatsoever of the lines on which the orders will be made. The Bill seek to give the widest possible power to Government to make any orders it likes. Now I do not think, Sir, that this is fair at all. To call such delegated legislation normal, morally speaking, is scarcely correct.

(Time bell rings.)

I think therefore that it is necessary that Government should place the orders, before they become effective, before the Legislature. It has been stated, Sir, in sub-clause (4) of clause 3 that "before making any order under this section, the Central Government shall consult associations of publishers, and such publishers likely to be affected by the order as it may think fit with respect to the action proposed to be taken". Now this is good so far as it goes, but I think it is necessary that the orders should be placed before this Legislature for its consideration before they are given effect to. Such a provision exists in many Acts, and I do not think that it will detract from the effectiveness of this Bill if a similar provision is inserted in it, and I do not think a delay of 15 days in promulgating the orders will matter at all; on the contrary I think it will enable all concerned to have sometime to consider the character of the orders proposed to be made, and in particular enable Members of Parliament to express their views with regard to such

them as appear to them to be undesirable or unreasonable.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA (Bombay): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I welcome this measure. From days of the debate on the Report of the Press Commission we have thrashed many points where it concerned the smaller papers, the smaller publishers and specially the Indian language papers. This measure, Sir, is only one step forward. I agree with Dr. Kunzru when he says that it is vague and that the Government could have done better by taking more time and giving us more concrete methods by which they were going to act, as the Minister has said that the smaller papers are to be given a helping hand by eliminating unfair competition and equalising opportunities.

This is only one method by which the Press Commission sought to bring about a sort of an equilibrium between the big and the small papers. But this is not all. Sooner rather than later the Government will have to contemplate the manner in which the small papers have to survive. The price is not the only thing. The hon. Minister mentioned the statutory corporation in U.K. which distributes newsprint and on this point of newsprint the smaller papers are going to suffer even after this. We have seen in war time the price and page control. We knew how the big papers cornered the newsprint, how they doled it out at blackmarket rates to the smaller papers. Unless all these factors are co-ordinated, merely price and page schedule is not going to help us very much.

The second thing is, what about the printing machinery? Dr. Kunzru has said that lesser talents may get the better of it with this price and page schedule. I do not think so. That is not true. Even to publish a page like this there is not enough machinery to go round. It is still the monopolistic press that will hold the small papers to ransom. But nevertheless we congratulate the Government, even though this measure is vague, that it has made an effort to come forward to do something. /

I have no time, so I shall begin with what Mr. Jain has said here on behalf of the smaller papers. He has mentioned four or five points by which the smaller papers could get a big lift in a big way and at the end of his arguments he came back to say, but why have this five years limit? In one breath he is showing us

how the smaller papers could be helped. In his final breath he says he is afraid of the five years' time limit.....

SHRI SHRIYANS PRASAD JAIN: I want to make a clarification.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: I cannot help you; I have no time. He talked of equal opportunities and he also tried to show that the smaller papers had equal opportunities. May I know how you tackle advertising? The bigger papers are in the urban areas. They have bigger and better organisations. They have bigger and better pull. May I say "influence" in naked language by which advertisements are cornered. Not only advertisements but names are cornered — even well-known names; when they write, often we find at the end of it that there is no substance in it. This then is the position in the press world today. You go to machinery. It is only the monopolistic press that can have the machinery. Even when the smaller papers want to start they have to go to them for printing. These are the difficulties and then Mr. Jain says that equal opportunities are there. We welcome this price-page schedule. In 141 during the days of control we saw the black side of how it worked. The newsprint was hoarded. Unless you release the newsprint for an equitable distribution at the same time as you fix the price-page schedule, it is not going to help the smaller papers at all.

Then Sir, everyone has referred here to the supplements. This clause here is very vague. The word "may" is used right through. In clause 3, sub-clause (2), it says:—

"(b) may contain different provisions for daily newspapers..... separate provisions for weekly editions of daily newspapers whether appearing under the same title or not, and also for supplements or special editions of newspapers issued on special occasions;"

Sir, here what you are giving us by the right hand you are taking away by the left hand. You say in sub-clause (4) that you will consult associations of publishers. I think in one of the amendments which will come forward it will say that merely saying publishers is not enough. We know the small proprietors, the smaller editors, the working journalists. Where are they going to find a place if you say consult associations of publishers? The publishers that exist in this

[Shrimati Violet Alva.] country today are publishers that have a pull and pocket full of money. If you want to protect that interest you cannot go and consult publishers all over again and give us a surprise in this very House. You must also have an advisory board as Dr. Kunzru has suggested which should be wide in representation of interests and why not even include some Members of Parliament? I am only making a suggestion. It may be difficult technically; it may not be acceptable. That is another point. But I am only making a suggestion because I find here that the Government is trying to take sweeping discretion to itself by saying associations of publishers. And on supplements we know what supplements are. Tomorrow we shall be flooded with supplements and who can produce supplements? Only a few big papers. They can throw it away to the waste-paper buyer rather than sell it to the readers. The supplements used to be found wanting in the daily papers once upon a time and there was a grievance from the readers. And then they started putting up a box in the first page saying there is a supplement, so many pages given free with this number. That is the way it is done. But, Sir, supplements are nothing else but a mass bribery. Yes, I do maintain is because I do know a little of this business of the fourth estate.

SHRI J. S. BISHT: You mean the Sunday edition with magazines are bribery?

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: I am talking of supplements. You may classify them in any manner you like. Recently we had a Resolution moved and accepted unanimously in this House on advertisements and the manner in which they are distributed. The House is well aware that the foreign domination in the advertising world is very great. They carry a pull of 74 per cent of the total advertising. If that be so, do you think that the smaller papers have any chance for away in the modfussil areas, in the villages to draw on advertising? It is very difficult. They cannot afford a canvasser; they cannot afford an organisation. But I do not agree with the other speakers when they say that all of them lack talent. Talent is plenty. It is the means that are wanted; it is for want of means that they suffer. But I do want to accede that in this business my colleague, Mr. Iain, spoke of it as an industry, I speak of it as the real power that should be built for a growing democracy, where literacy is growing day by day, inch by inch, where we

want freedom of opinion, where each paper wants revenue. Freedom of opinion does not come unless you can stand on your own legs. Purposes are seldom single and motives seldom unmixed. The desire to make money, the desire to make opinion and the desire to make a good newspaper can and do insensibly blend. Today the hon. Minister has come forward in an attempt to blend all these. We want a good newspaper and we want free opinion. I must here again make a reference to what I said at me time when I moved that Resolution on advertising, that freedom of opinion is not seen in many of our big papers. How many times is the issue that is taken up on the floor of Parliament blacked out? There is not a paper that will publish the names of certain firms. There are papers that will not publish names of certain trade interests. That is the state of the fourth estate in our country. It may mean that this Bill is very vague and the delegation of powers that are sought to be taken are vaguer still. Everything is so vague. We are almost in a blind alley. I wish the hon. Minister would clarify his stand because we do not know where he stands. Does he mean that by the price-page schedule he is going to make more newsprint available? The bigger papers can even distribute their copies free. I still have to live and learn that a paper can stand on its sales alone. If a paper tries to run merely on its sale, it would collapse the next morning. It needs more than that. It needs big financiers. It needs resources to run it. Are not other trades run by big people?

(Time bell rings.)

Sir, a few more points and I shall conclude my speech. Sir, if it means distribution of a little more newsprint, then we want more clarification of this subclause (2). How does he say that separate provisions will be made? What kind of provisions will be made? We who are going to put this Bill on the Statute Book have a right to know what kind of provisions will be made. Let him say what is in his mind at least. You say that separate provision will be made for daily newspapers appearing at different places—the same paper appearing at different places—and for supplements or special editions of newspapers issued on special occasions. Sir, we know the manner in which the working journalists have had to fight the battle day after day till they get something. I have a fear that by this provision the same big business will do what they want.

Consultation will be there, but there are so many loopholes to every law that we make that they will find their own level again and go on merrily singing their own tune. Then, Sir, the Minister put down the pros and cons. "It is likely to create an unfavourable impression in the world." We do not care for the world. We are building up a democracy for ourselves. We are building up a democracy with masses of illiterate people. If opinion goes that way, then we have our own arguments. We have our own problems and we want to offer our own solutions, and this is just one step towards the solution. Very vague, but the Government has put faith in it and we still put our hopes in them and we still feel that this will be the beginning of the happy end to see that the small papers turn big and economically grow sounder and stronger. Mr. Jain also pointed out that the Government should give advertisements to the smaller papers and there should be free distribution. I do not agree. Why should we have this begging bowl? As far as distribution of advertisements goes, I think it is the bounden duty of the Government to give advertisements to all sound papers and ignore the circulation point altogether for the present, because if you go by circulation the bigger papers can never permit release of advertisements for the smaller ones. Why should papers be bought by the Government and distributed? I think a paper must stand on its own stamp of opinion, on the opinion it spreads, and if by that opinion Government feel that they must buy a thousand or two thousand or ten thousand copies to be distributed, that is another thing. But a paper must stand on its own independence of views. We have too much of these monopolistic tendency showing up, very many bad and ugly signs. We want a free Press, where a free and impartial opinion is expressed.

I welcome this measure and I hope it will be speedily and unanimously passed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Do hon. Members like to sit for half an hour more?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND (Hyderabad) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, I have listened to the speech of certain hon. Members who are connected with small newspapers. I want to speak only as a reader of newspapers. I would like to

know from the hon. Minister how this Bill is going to affect the ordinary reader of newspapers. What does the ordinary reader want from the newspaper? He wants, Sir, good news, but of course good and correct news is supplied by the All-India Radio also. But over and above good and correct news he wants views, views expressed by editors of repute, by editors who have experience, who are independent people and who can write freely. Sir, the newspaper reading public has changed its taste. Now we go to the newspaper for reading articles on important matters, up-to-date articles giving information. Many readers do not look to the books do not wade through big, but want to read an article in a newspaper. Therefore Sir, I submit that we want to encourage small papers, but in this competitive world, the small people will not be able to get Reuter's latest service on the teleprinter. They will not be able to get good correspondents writing articles for them. They cannot attract good authors for their views on current matters. The result is that we want to encourage third rate newspapers in our country under the name of protecting small newspapers. Why is this solicitude for the small newspapers? In industry we think of a planned economy, and in planned economy, Sir, either we allow free enterprise or we say that for a particular industry there should be only so many factories and so many enterprises. Similarly, Sir, in newspapers there should be some restriction so that we have only so many newspapers in our country. But why should we permit any young man or old man to start a newspaper and come round to the Government to give it protection against the big newspapers so that the small newspaper may give out any sort of information, correct or incorrect, and yet continue its existence? I submit, Sir, that in our new democracy it is very essential that there should be the fullest freedom of the Press. By this Bill, directly or indirectly the hon. Minister wants to control the Press, the newspapers. The hon. Minister of course in his very eloquent speech tried to safeguard his viewpoint. He says that the Government will so use their powers that it will not curtail freedom of the Press. But I beg to submit, Sir, that indirectly for encouraging the small newspapers, and creating discrimination against opposition papers, the rules and regulations are not going to be uniform. They can be different for different areas, they can

[Shri Kishen Chand.]

be different for different classes of newspapers. Indirectly this methods can be utilised for suppressing the opposition papers who express unwanted views on Government activities or on the activities- of certain hon. Ministers. Therefore, Sir, the hon. Minister does not want to give all the rules and regulations that are going to be framed. He just takes a general power, and the entire powers are left to the Central Government to make any rules. These rules are not going to be placed before the Parliament for consideration as in the case of all other rules framed under the Bill that is passed by the two Houses of Parliament. Only in the case of this Bill an exception has been made. The rules are not going to be placed before the House and the House will not have an opportunity of discussing them.

Then, Sir, the hon. Minister says that the critics fears are imaginary. I would like to know, Sir, how it is going to really help the small newspapers. Can he produce any statistics that by this type of encouragement the small newspapers will be able to survive ? He said that this is not new thing and that even in foreign countries there are some sort of restrictions on newspapers, and yet in the same breath he said that this was from a different object, that it was only on account of the shortage of newsprint. Sir, there is a sort of minimum price for a maximum number of pages, and if you make the minimum price fairly low, if you keep the price at two annas for 20 pages, the small newspapers will not be able to compete, and if you make the price very high, it will become prohibitive for our poor countrymen. You know, Sir, the price in the United Kingdom of a newspaper with 24 pages is about two pence, but in our country a newspaper with 12 pages charges two annas and a half, and yet the hon. Minister wants to make it still higher.

I strongly oppose this Bill. I think it is absolutely unwanted.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I should like to say that I agree with the main objectives underlying this Bill. So far as the object of the BUI is concerned, there can be no objection to it. But I have got one or two difficulties which I hope the hon. Minister will remove before this measure leaves this House.

Now, Sir, I have heard it said that the Bill represents an effort in some way to

control the press. The Bill probably contemplates that there shall be a Registrar of the Press. Although that has not been stated in this Bill, yet a reference has been made to a registrar under this Bill. Now although one knows in a general way what the Press Commission's recommendations are, yet one does not have any clear picture of how those recommendations are going to be worked out in the rules to be framed under this Bill. What I mean to say is this that the powers which the Minister would like this House to delegate to him are of a far too extensive character. They are not confined within any canalised limits. I do not say that from a strictly constitutional point of view, this delegation will be invalid. But I think it is essential in order to satisfy the spirit of the constitution that the House should know exactly what the powers which it is going to delegate are. We know that the Government will have the power to regulate competition by fixing prices of newspapers and by fixing the space for advertisements, and all that. But that is all very vague. We want to have something more concrete and we want to know actually how this thing will help smaller newspapers. It is no doubt of great importance to a country to possess a national press. That we must continue to have in this country as well. In the United States, there is "The Washington Post", "The New York Times", and "The Tribune". But you cannot call them national papers in the same sense as you can call "The Times" or "The Manchester Guardian" or "The Daily Herald" or "The News Chronicle". Now, Sir, no one wants that the press should develop here along any monopolistic lines. It will indeed be an evil day for this country when the press develops along those lines.

(Time bell rings.)

Sir, since the time available is limited, I would like to suggest that the hon. Minister should agree to certain improvements in the clause relating to power of making rules, that is to say, he should agree to the suggestion that the rules, when framed by him in consultation with the interests concerned and in consultation with the Press Council to be appointed, should be placed before this House and those rules should not be brought into operation until this House has, by a specific resolution, approved them. This is the minimum that the hon. Minister should do in fairness to the

Members of this House who have had no opportunity of examining the scheme that he has in mind. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI PERATH NARAYANAN NAIR (Madras): Mr. Deputy Chairman, however much I would like to reply to some of the points raised by Mr. Jain and by Mr. Kishen Chand, the time at my disposal is very limited, and therefore I wish to confine myself to just two or three points only.

What is going to be the shape of the schedule ? Dr. Kunzru has pointed out that that point has been left very vague in this Bill. The hon. Minister, in the course of his preliminary remarks, referred to certain preliminary discussions, which he had with certain proprietary organisations and all that. But if my information is correct, there is ground for serious misgivings. I am informed, Sir, that certain powerful interests and big papers have already prepared a certain schedule, and the peculiar feature of that schedule is that a bonus in the form of extra pages is allowed under that scheme. I am told that for a four-page paper the price of one anna is fixed, and that small paper is not to get any bonus. Then for a 6-page paper the price of one anna and six pies is fixed and that paper will get 30 pages a month by way of bonus. For an eight-page paper the price of two anna is fixed, and that paper will get, if my information is correct, 90 pages per month. So, Sir, the powerful interests are working along those lines, and I am also told that the Government may be tempted to accept some such scheme. But I submit, Sir, that if you are going to accept any such scheme, you will be defeating the very purpose of this legislation. An eight-page paper selling at two annas will be getting 90 more pages by way of bonus per month. And then you know, Sir, that there are commercial supplements, there are aviation supplements and plantation supplements, and so on and so forth.

I therefore request the hon. Minister to see that when he thinks of preparing this schedule, the provisions regarding bonus and other things are not there, because they will be defeating the very purpose of this legislation. Sir, Mr. Jain has made certain suggestions for improving the lot of the smaller newspapers and for protecting them against any competition. But as Mrs. Alva has pointed out, we do not want this sort of patronage from the Government. We

will not be satisfied if some thousands of copies or some hundreds of copies are purchased, or if some advertisements are given to us by way of patronage. In the matter of newsprint, Sir, what the Government can do is to arrange for block purchase of newsprint and then make it available to the smaller newspapers at cost price. For State trading, this newsprint is a very good thing to start with.

Then, again, referring to unfair competition and other things, I submit that this multiple unit system and amalgamation of accounts of the chain newspapers and all that sort of thing have been elaborately dealt with by the Press Commission, and it is too late in the day to claim in this House that no unfair competition exists.

The final point which I have to make is that, though the price-page schedule is welcome to us, that by itself may not serve the purpose which the Government have in view. The protection of smaller newspapers from unfair competition requires certain other measures such as the revision of the news agency tariffs suggested by the Press Commission and also telescopic tariff rates for advertisements by Government. In the case of these combines and chains, the Press Commission had insisted on a separation of accounts for each unit. If all these things are embodied in some comprehensive legislation, they will give some relief, some help, to the smaller papers. This touches only the fringe of the problem. If it is properly worked, it will give some help to smaller papers, and to that extent it is welcome. But I would request the Government to take into consideration the various other salutary recommendations made by the Press Commission and embody them in a comprehensive Bill.

(Dr. B. V. Keskar rose to speak.)

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA (Uttar Pradesh) : Are we short of time even today ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SHRI J. S. BIHST: You may allow five minutes each.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Minister wants twenty minutes.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: The time limit is three hours and we started at three. Ordinarily also it should terminate only at six.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If there is time, you may speak on the third reading. We will try to close at 5-30.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I have carefully listened to the various criticisms and also the favourable reflections by hon. Members regarding this Bill. First of all I might be permitted to say that there is some misunderstanding in the minds of some of my friends regarding the scope of the Bill. If we look at the provisions, it will be found that the Bill enjoins that there should be a fixation of the price of a paper for a particular number of pages, nothing more. There is no questions of rules and regulations, sub-rules and sub-regulations. The power proposed to be given by this Bill is only to fix from time to time the price at which a paper might sell for a maximum number of pages.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU: And area.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: And the area of a paper is expressed in so many square inches. This is the standard way in which price-page schedules are fixed. Supposing we say so many pages if a paper prints one big page, then the whole purpose will be defeated. Therefore, it is necessary—and it has been done wherever a price-page schedule has been in existence—that the size of a paper should be given in so many square inches. Area refers to this and does not refer to anything else.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: What is the standard measurement of the size of a paper? It is nowhere mentioned.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: What I am pointing out is that the power taken is only to announce from time to time the prices at which papers with a particular number of pages will sell. There are no rules, regulations, conditions and other things. Hon. Members felt as if this is an Act under which like the Working Journalists Act or any other Act, rules and regulations have to be made. No such rules and regulations have to be made under this.

Pandit Kunzru said that it was very vague. My learned legal friend, Mr. Sapru, also made the same remark. I myself might be guilty of a little obtuseness but I don't see any vagueness here. The powers are given for a very specific purpose, which are mentioned in very great detail. It is only to fix the price of certain classes of newspapers. If hon. Members will look at it, they will find that the power is taken

only for daily and weekly newspapers; for no other class of paper power has been taken.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU: Biweeklies.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Daily, weekly and in between. It does not apply to any other periodical at all, viz., fortnightly or monthly. It applies to newspapers, even it does not apply to any periodical even if it is a weekly, which does not come within the definition of a newspaper. Secondly, the order also makes it clear that it shall fix only the price and no other things regarding the regulation of newspapers. It is not possible for Government to do so. The power given is explicit.

A great point has been made that we are taking power without giving the kind of prices that we are going to fix. If I may submit respectfully—I have great regard for my friend, Pandit Kunzru, nothing can be more harmful to the newspapers themselves than to fix a rigid price schedule here on the spot. Parliament may discuss for a month or so in this House and the other House a particular price schedule before deciding. The price schedule has been kept elastic for a very specific purpose, to be done in consultation with the newspapers concerned, because the factors which govern the price of a paper are bound to change. There is a question of the price of newsprint and there are many other questions. Suppose tomorrow the newsprint price suddenly rises very high, and papers have to change their prices, and they come to us. We will have again to run here in order to have any change made. Now, if we agree that there should be some flexibility with this price-page schedule with a view to serving the purpose for which it is made, then nothing can be more harmful than having a rigid schedule fixed here after discussion in Parliament. I submit that there are a number of factors involved in determining the cost of a newspaper the profits that they make or do not make, their losses, and a number of other items of statistics which will have to be taken into consideration and which cannot be brought and discussed on the floor of the House and which a number of newspapers would decline to put on the floor of the House also. I think, therefore, that it would not be fair for the papers themselves that we should try to fix any schedule here and now.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU: I did not ask for that. I pleaded for flexibility, the

very thing for which the hon. Minister is pleading now.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Asking us to come out with a price schedule here practically comes to that, which, for the reasons which I have specified, it will not be possible for us to do. No doubt, hon. Members might feel some misgivings as to the Government misusing their powers.

5 P.M.

SHRI J. S. BISHT: May I seek a clarification? In clause 3 you say "pages, sizes or areas". What do you mean by "areas"?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: "Areas" means, for example when defining what the number of pages should be, you have pages should be, you have got the size of a newspaper. For example, every newspaper has a different size. Then the total area that a newspaper will have has to be defined because if it is not done, then a number of papers will find loopholes to evade the order and it is for that reason that it is given. If hon. Members consulted the price-page schedule order that used to exist during the war time, they will find that it is exactly as stated here. This kind of language has been drafted very carefully after experience and it is not something new that we are putting here. There was another misunderstanding about the class of papers. Hon. Members thought that we want to discriminate between newspapers in one State and newspapers in another State. That is not so. The object of this is that if at all necessary, there should be power to give a different schedule for certain regional language papers. Hon. Members themselves are quite aware that the conditions in the newspaper industry is not the same in the different languages. There are certain languages which are so backward as far as newspaper development is concerned that a rigid schedule for the whole of the country might practically work to the disadvantage of the majority of the papers in the particular regional language. I don't want to refer to a particular region and make it out too prominent but there are many regions like that. I do not personally want to have any such discrimination in favour of any language, but if it becomes necessary, think we should allow that to be done. We don't at all want that as far as one language is concerned, there should be any discrimination between a paper published in Delhi and another published in Madras.

There should be no discrimination but it might happen that papers in Oriya or in Assamese or some other language might find a schedule which is fixed for English, Hindi, Bengali, and other leading languages completely to their disadvantage and that is the reason why we have put "class of newspapers". "Class" therefore really refers to class of a regional language and nothing else.

Hon. Members might rest assured that Government is fully aware of its responsibilities. I might confess in this connection that Government was very reluctant to take these powers. In fact during all these discussions about the Press Commission and elsewhere, we have tried not to have this thrust upon the Government because we are ground between two millstones. On the one hand, if Government does not do anything, it is attacked for not doing and if it tried to do something, then it is said that the Government is trying to tyrannise, that it is taking too much power or that it is dictatorial. As far as press is concerned, our position is very delicate and we don't try to and we would not like to interfere and hon. Members know well that if we have taken this upon ourselves, it is after very strong pressure and requests from hon. Members and from the majority of the press. They should not accuse Government as if it is out to control the press. That is far from our intention and that is one of the reasons why the Bill is for a short duration when we would like to see whether the working of the schedule will be really to the advantage of the press. We will have full time for the experiment and if it succeeds, then only we will proceed further otherwise not but I hope Members will not accuse Government of taking the initiative in the matter. The Press Commission has put in such a strong and emphatic language and that language has further been strengthened by the opinion of this House and the other House and also a large number of newspapers in the country that we have been compelled to act in the matter. I hope my friend Dr. Kunzru will not suspect me of trying very gladly to take all these powers. I quite realise that it is going to mean a lot of headache but the Government has to do sometimes many difficult and unpleasant things and probably this is one of them. A number of points have been raised. There is the question of when the schedule is going to be published. My friend the Leader of the Opposition, has been saying that it must be done by a particular date. I

[Dr. B. V. KESKAR.]

regret that I cannot satisfy him. He has anticipated me by criticising me saying that I will reply in such and such a way and I have only to repeat what he said that I cannot give any particular date but certainly we will try to expedite it. At the same time I do not want to rush this through. This must be done carefully. As I said the price-page schedule which existed before was for rationing newsprint. This is for quite a different purpose and we will have to deal carefully with this matter to see that the objectives that are before

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You can give us some rough idea of the time. People are giving ideas with regard to nuclear research and atomic reactors. Why not give some idea of the time-limit ?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Regarding the price-page schedule, I might reassure that it will be done very quickly. The moment the legislation is passed, consultation will take place immediately and I hope that it will come into operation soon. That is the only thing I can say. I am sure this expectations have been satisfied that I have given him a vague answer.

The other point is regarding supplements. No doubt Members have made great capital out of the word "supplements" here. If you look at the Bill, you will find that it is very definitely mentioned as follows: "Supplements or special editions of newspapers issued on special occasions". I hope hon. Members will give some credit to the Government for not being irrational or losing their perspective. Government realizes that under the guise of supplements, the Act can be evaded in a very easy way. The supplements that are mentioned here are published if the hon. Member will look at the words "on special occasions". The special occasions are to be determined by us. This is necessary in my opinion because there are special occasions of national festivals like the Republic Day, or 15th August or one or two other important festivals on which newspapers will bring out supplements and we should not discourage them from doing so and which it would not be proper for us to discourage them. Really speaking, the supplements to which hon. Members are referring are not at all included here. They are mainly referring to commercial supplements and for that naturally no allotment or no provision is going to be made here. They can be quite sure about that. The

supplements that are referred to here are for festivals of national importance on which even the reading public expects the papers to give them something and I think we would be wrong in not expecting the papers to satisfy the readers to that extent.

DR. R. B. GOUR (Hyderabad): Why not specify it by an adjective saying "Supplements of national importance" ?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: He should give credit to the Government for that much of common sense. We will not give. If we give, he can attack the Government in this House and say that the Government has been remiss and has given the newspapers very many concessions which should not have been given but I hope he will trust my work that excepting such things, nothing else will come in this.

Then my friend Mr. Jain is opposed to the object of this Bill. By object I mean that he thinks that this way the smaller papers will not be helped and he has made a number of suggestions regarding giving help to smaller papers. The suggestions are interesting. We will see what can be done about those suggestions but I do not agree with him when he says that there is equality of opportunity between the different papers -today. That I cannot agree. By equality of opportunity, if he means legal opportunity, that might be so but otherwise I don't think that it would be correct to say that there is equality of opportunity. When Government tries to come in, it must be remembered also that the Government is not trying to take away all the disadvantages that the new papers might be labouring under. That is not our object. Our object is to see that all unfair disadvantages that a newcomer or that different papers might be suffering from should be removed. By unfair disadvantages I mean what may be called unjournalistic practices. It is only these that we want to remove; because there will be disparity, there will be competition and some papers are bound to come up and some are bound to go down. That cannot be helped. The incentive otherwise will go away from the papers. But there are unfair practices which any reasonable journalist, any person connected with the newspaper industry would agree, are not fair. It is hitting below the belt and it is only these that we try to remove. We are not interested and we cannot take steps to remove all the disadvantages that might be there. It is impossible to make all the papers equal and that is also not our object.

The hon. Member thought that there should be an advisory body. He probably thinks that we are going to consult only the papers which are affected. There I think he is under the misunderstanding. We will consult all papers, not individually every paper, but all groups of papers of all sorts, they will be consulted. We are not going to consult those papers only which will be affected by the price going to be fixed. That will be a wrong idea.

SHRI SHRIYANS PRASAD JAIN:
Such publishers likely to be affected.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: When I say groups of newspapers, we will have to call those which will be affected in order to give them more time so that they do not have any grouse that they have not been given full hearing. This is really in order to be more helpful to them and not only to make them exclude others from the scope of the Bill. The papers will have no grouse that anybody has been left out. Therefore, I do not think later on they can say that they were neglected before orders were passed in this matter.

In discussing this problem as a whole, I am afraid that many of our friends have been making a mistake, as if the price-page schedule alone is going to change completely the economic structure of newspapers and that all papers are going to be built up. If we look at the Press Commission's Report carefully we will find that the Commission itself has indicated that there are other factors which are also necessary before the papers can get adequate protection and be able to stand on their own feet. This is one of the factors which the Press Commission believes will help newspapers, to stand against unfair and unjournalistic competition. They do not say that this alone is going to change because it is likely that after this measure is passed and implemented, people will come and say "Look here, you promised so many things, and they have not happened." So I would like to warn hon. Members not to pin everything on this price-page schedule, for there are other factors which also will have to be taken into consideration.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: When?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Pardon?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: When are you supposed to deal with the other factors in the form of a legislation? 6—i2 R. S./56

DR. B. V. KESKAR: The other factors are not in the hands of Government, these other factors exist in every industry and will have to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Gupta was saying that I doubled whether this price-page schedule would succeed. I did not say that. What I said was that I felt on the data that was available to us—and that is incomplete—in certain matters this schedule would help a number of newspapers. We cannot make a categorical statement here. Government cannot make such categorical statements unless they are furnished with complete data which we have to study later on when they come. But we feel that there is reasonable ground for believing that it will help papers in certain categories and it is for that purpose alone that Government has brought forward this legislation. We make categorical declarations only when we feel it should be done and when we are fortified with all the facts.

One hon. Member asked "Well, you are making the Schedule. But suppose the Schedule does not succeed, what happens?" Sir, I cannot forecast whether the Schedule will succeed or not. That will have to be left to the future. But certainly Government is flexible enough to change what it is doing if it is seen that the thing does not succeed or has failed in its objective. That is a hypothetical case which need not be taken up at this stage.

DR. R. B. GOUR: Will Government's flexibility be utilised for change in the direction that the press barons want?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: The hon. Member is quite free to make any guess he likes, I leave him free.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why not say "No"?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Mr. Jain had made one or two remarks about papers and their number of pages, that the reader will get less than what he is getting. I do not want to deliver here a thesis on newspapers or the number of pages they should have or that they have. But broadly speaking, I do not think that a large number of pages necessarily means more and more attractive reading matter. It need not necessarily be so. We have seen for example that in Great Britain, even in the days of rigid price schedule—it does not exist now—the papers were selling as well and having as much attractive matter as

[Dr. B. V. Keskar.] they can have today, in a smaller number of pages. And I would go further and say that if the number of pages increases beyond a particular extent, it will be difficult for a paper to give attractive and useful material. The space will have to be filled up with a lot of things advertisements and things other than advertisements, which may not be so attractive to the readers. So I do not think that in order to become popular, it is absolutely essential for the paper to have a large number of pages. It may be that a paper of two pages may not be so popular as a paper of four pages. But a paper of twelve pages need not be as popular as another of eight pages. So there is a certain mean in this matter which it is difficult to lay down. A limit is reached beyond which pages alone cannot give a paper popularity. As I have said at the very beginning, our position has been a little delicate and this Bill has been drafted very carefully and every comma and fullstop has been weighed and weighed very carefully. We are not trying to have any power which is unnecessary or large or vague. I assure the House that at any time the Government feels that any of the powers given here are not necessary, or are likely to be badly used, we will come to the House or drop them. We are not at all eager to have all these powers. But I would like also the House to give us some credit for not providing certain things here which hon. Members might feel might have been here.

Fear was expressed by Mr. Kishen Chand that newspapers will cost more. I do not agree with him. This is based on a misunderstanding that we are trying to increase the cost of papers. The fact is that here it is an attempt to fix not the price of papers but a particular price for the number of pages that the paper will give and I do not think that will mean necessarily that every paper will increase its price. Supposing it has to reduce two pages, the paper would rather prefer to reduce its pages than increase its price.

If have tried to deal with some of the points raised by hon. Members.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: What would be the attitude of Government with regard to the space occupied by a particular newspaper in the printing of advertisements? How will it compare—favourably or unfavourably—with those newspapers which get lesser advertisements and occupy lesser space? Will

that be taken into account while determining the price on the price-page basis?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: The amount of advertisement in a paper cannot naturally determine the price of the paper but if the hon. Member reads the Bill, he will find that the percentage of advertisements to reading matter in a newspaper would be fixed. Hon. Members might remember that the Press Commission had recommended that a particular percentage may be fixed between reading matter and advertisement. In fact, as was mentioned even today, the percentage exists. For any newspaper to be accepted by the Post Office for despatch, it must fulfil certain conditions, that it must have at least half reading matter and not more than half of advertisement matter. If the advertisement matter is more, then it would not be accepted.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What happens to the commercial supplements? After all, they are all advertisements, more than 50 per cent. Are they accepted by the Post Office?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Mr. Gupta did not listen to me when I said that the commercial supplements will not be considered as supplements under this Bill.

I think I have dealt with all the points raised by hon. Members.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the regulation of the prices charged for newspapers in relation to their pages and of matters connected therewith for the purpose of preventing unfair competition among newspapers so that newspapers may have fuller opportunities of freedom of expression be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

Clause 2—Definitions

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Bill was circulated long ago. Mr. Kapoors' amendment has come late and so, it is luled out as belated.

SHRI JASPAT ROY KAPOOR (Uttar Pradesh): I was not seeking permission to move that amendment at all, Sir. I only wanted to speak on the clause.

I do not grudge Dr. Keskar claiming credit for drafting the Bill with great care. Every comma and fullstop is said to have been given due consideration but I am sorry I cannot agree with him in that view. May be that the commas and fullstops had been given great consideration but so far as the essentials are concerned, I am sorry to find that they have not been given the consideration that they deserve. Else, I do not see why in clause 2, two separate definitions have been given of daily newspapers and newspapers. Not only one of these definitions viz. that of "daily newspaper" appears to me to be redundant but obviously the separate definitions create confusion when we pass on to clauses 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Bill. A daily newspaper has been defined, of course, giving it its obvious meaning but the wider term, newspaper, has been defined to exclude daily newspapers. Only periodical newspapers are included with the definition of newspapers. Now, this word "newspaper" alone has been used throughout this Bill in as many as thirteen places—I have taken the trouble to count them—and only at one place the term "daily newspaper" has been used. Obviously, the whole Bill is intended to cover not only the newspapers as defined here, that is, the periodical newspapers, but daily newspapers also. Now, the reference in all the clauses from 3 to 6, is to newspapers alone and not to daily newspapers.

SHRI J. S. BISHT: What is wrong with it?

SHRI JASPAT ROY KAPOOR: It is obviously wrong. If we are to interpret newspapers only with reference to subclause (b) of clause 2, then it would mean that these provisions do not apply to daily newspapers.

SHRI J. S. BISHT: Why not?

SHRI JASPAT ROY KAPOOR: If my hon. friend Mr. Bisht, takes care to see, he will find that the newspaper has been defined as something other than a daily newspaper. It should not be so. Inordinary parlance.....

SHRI J. S. BISHT: At intervals of not more than a week. It may be an interval of 24 hours.

SHRI JASPAT ROY KAPOOR: I agree but if that is so, then there is no necessity for defining daily newspapers separately. I agree with my hon.

friend, Mr. Bisht that even daily newspapers are published within an interval of 24 hours or 20 hours. That being so, why do you define a daily newspaper? That is exactly my point. The daily newspapers must come within the definitions of newspapers themselves.

SHRI J. S. BISHT: There are the bi-weekly or tri-weekly papers.

SHRI JASPAT ROY KAPOOR: True and, therefore, I submit that the word newspaper only should be defined, extending its scope to cover daily newspaper also. Of course, I am not moving my amendment but I gave notice of it only to suggest to the hon. Dr. Keskar whether it would not be advisable for him to delete the definition of daily newspaper here and only let the newspaper be defined bringing within its purview daily newspaper also. There may not be any legal difficulty but surely it is not a proper way of drafting a measure.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: There is no mistake in drafting. It had been very carefully drafted and what the hon. Member feels as a confusion is very great clarity. Here, it is necessary to have two definitions because a schedule which will apply to a daily newspaper cannot apply to a weekly edition of a newspaper. As far as the two definitions are concerned, the hon. Members, if they read them carefully, will find that newspaper is a generic term and a daily newspaper is a variant of that, a paper that is published as a daily newspaper. We have made it clear here that it should be a paper printed for not less than six days in a week. There are a number of papers which publish for six days while there are others which publish for seven days. While the general term covers all sorts of papers, it is necessary to define the daily papers to make it very clear. I myself felt that this was confusing in the beginning but when the definitions were considered carefully, we found that it was absolutely essential. This is taken also from the Press Registration Act which is very old and whose definitions have been accepted traditionally for a very long time.

SHRI JASPAT ROY KAPOOR: I am not objecting to it but I only want to seek one clarification. I am not making a speech.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order. You cannot make another speech now. Please resume your seat.

The question is:

[Mr. Deputy Chairman.]
"That clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill

Clause 3—Power to regulate price and pages of newspapers, etc.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar): Sir, I beg to move:

1. "That at page 2, line 33, after the word 'consult' the word 'the Press Council of India, if any, and' be inserted."

2. "That at page 2, after line 35, the following be inserted, namely:—

'(5) Any order made under this section shall, as soon as possible after it is made, be laid before both Houses of Parliament, and shall be subject to such modifications as Parliament may make during the session in which it is so laid.'"

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I beg to move:

4. "That at page 2, after line 14, the following be inserted, namely:—

'(1A) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), the Central Government shall, before October 1, 1956, make an order as provided in sub-section (1)."

5. "That at page 2, at the end of line 14, after the word 'therein' the words 'and for the amount of commission in cash or otherwise that might be given to agents for the sale of newspapers or for the canvassing of advertisement' be inserted."

7. "That at page 2, lines 22 to 24, the words 'and also for supplements or special edition of newspapers issued on special occasions' be deleted."

(These amendments also stood in the name of Shri Perath Narayanan Nair.)

8. "That at page 2, line 33, for the words 'associations of publishers' the words 'associations of journalists, working journalists, newspaper editors' be substituted."

9. "That at page 2, after line 35, the following be inserted, namely:—

'(5) An order under this section shall be placed before both Houses of Parliament at the first opportunity after the order is passed.'"

(Amendments numbers 8 and 9 stood also in the name of Dr. R. B. Gour.)

10. "That at page 2, after line 35, the following be inserted, namely:—

'(5) Every order made under this section shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as may be, and shall be subject to such modifications as may be made by the Houses on a motion in this regard within a period of fourteen days from the date on which the order was laid on the Table of the Houses:

Provided that if the House or the Houses are not in session during any such period, such period shall not be taken into consideration in computing the fourteen days."

(This amendment also stood in the name of Shri Perath Narayanan Nair.)

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA:
How long are we going to sit, Sir?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: As long as necessary. We must finish this Bifi to-day.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA:
Mr. Deputy Chairman, we are interested to promote the growth and the welfare of the smaller papers, particularly language papers. We are also interested, Sir, in the welfare of the journalists, particularly those employed in those smaller papers. We are also interested to improve the standards, the quality of these papers. Therefore, Sir, I feel that there are more than one interest that need be consulted before a price-page schedule is fixed for the different sets of paper or classes of paper. I have put in my amendment No. 1 to sub-clause (4) of clause 3. In that sub-clause (4) it is stated: "... the Central Government shall consult associations of publishers, and such publishers likely to be affected by the order" etc. I do maintain, Sir, that there are more than one interest that need be consulted and therefore I have suggested that the Government should consult also the Press Council of India under the Press Council Bill which is already before this House, and therefore I have suggested in my amendment, Sir, that the Government should consult the Press Council of India, if any. Now, Sir, you will find that in this Press Council various interests are represented. You will find that there are 13 members from the working journalists out of which 6 are editors.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He knows all that. Come to the next amendment.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: I would like to enlighten the Members of this House.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is he who has introduced the Bill in this House. It will come into existence. Come to the next amendment.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: You will please give me a few minutes' time to present my points.

Now, Sir, you will find that the editors of three language papers will be represented in this; then three Members of Parliament and one from the Sahitya Akadami. Therefore the interests of the readers will also be represented in this Council. I submit that the hon. Minister should accede to my request and accept this amendment to consult the Press Council where all the interests are represented.

DR. R. B. GOUR: How does the hon. Member know that they are all represented on the Press Council? It has not come into existence.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: The Press Council is composed of these persons and therefore I have said that if any Press Council is set up, the Press Council should be consulted before fixing the price-page schedule.

Now my other amendment reads as follows: "Any order made under this section shall, as soon as possible after it is made, be laid before both Houses of Parliament, and shall be subject to such modifications as Parliament may make during the session in which it is so laid."

Now you have seen, Sir, that strong resentment has been voiced from different sections of the House that Parliament is not being given the opportunity to express itself on the various price schedules that will be fixed by the Government. It has been expressed, Sir, that the price schedule should be fixed after consulting this House. The hon. Minister says it is not possible. I have merely stated in this amendment that the order that will be made under this section should be laid before both Houses of Parliament and Parliament may be given a chance to discuss it and modify it if it so chooses, not that the price-page schedule will be fixed after a discussion in the House. The Minister will do all the consultations and will fix whatever

price he thinks proper and then enforce it also. My submission is that such provision has been provided in so many other legislations, and that orders made may be placed before the two Houses of Parliament, and we may be given a chance to deliberate upon them and to suggest modifications, and if the Government accept the modifications which we suggest, the orders will be modified; otherwise they will not be. Now, Sir, you will see that so far as the operational side of this Bill is concerned, it will not be hindered in the least if my amendment is accepted. They can come to the House after promulgating the order, any time when the House meets immediately thereafter, and if the House propose any modification in the very session in which it is placed, then alone it will be effective. So, Sir, this is a very innocent amendment and it will take away all the criticism that has been offered against this Bill in respect of the arbitrary power that has been taken by Government. All these points will be met if he accepts my amendment.

DR. R. B. GOUR: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I want to specially address the hon. Minister to kindly consider amendments Nos. 8 and 9. Sir, amendments Nos. 8 and 9 moved by me go to strengthen the Bill and the objects with which the Bill is placed before us to-day.

Sir, the hon. Minister said—and the Bill provides for the fixation of space for advertising matter and for the fixation of price in relation to pages, sizes, areas, etc.—that it is meant to defend the papers and the proprietors with smaller means. Now therefore, Sir, when in this clause 3, sub-clause (4) he comes and says: "Before making any order under this section, the Central Government shall consult associations of publishers"—and then again—"and such publishers likely to be affected" etc., it means the first person being consulted is the "associations of publishers". The second person that is consulted is another class of publishers who may be affected or likely to be affected. So, Sir, only those people who will oppose the very fundamentals of this Bill are coming under the purview or are having the privilege of giving the benefit of their consultations to Government and they will be consulted. It is these publishers, and the hon. Minister did not mince matters when he said that he wants to consult the proprietors of the newspapers. Unfortunately proprietors know little about their own newspapers because they

[Dr. R. B. Gour.] are only concerned with the balance-sheet and particularly the balance in the balance-sheet. Therefore, Sir, it is not proper only to consult them because they will oppose these measures. They will certainly bring in such prices or such schedules that will go to their benefit and they will oppose things that go to affect their purse. The proper persons who should be consulted and the result of whose consultation will be of great value to the Government for the purpose with which the Government in introducing this Bill are the editors. The editors know the proprietors very well and the working journalists know both the editors and the proprietors inside out. Therefore it is they, the editors and the working journalists, that should be consulted. That is why my amendment, and my amendment, if accepted by the hon. Minister, will only strengthen the Bill and the purpose with which the Bill is introduced.

My second amendment is No. 9 and it suggests that the order be placed before both the Houses of Parliament. That is all. I have even diluted Mr. Sinha's amendment. I knew Mr. Sinha's amendment was circulated earlier, but I knew that all these things will crop up. For example, suppose the Parliament modifies a certain thing or decides a certain thing, they may not be able to change it later on when a certain emergency arises or a certain eventuality arises. Therefore I have said that if they lay the thing before us we can air our views in the matter and discuss the thing here and with that discussion in view they could further modify the schedule and the order. Therefore, Sir, my amendment is not only innocent but will be of very great help to the Government and I hope, Sir, that the hon. Minister will be kind enough not to throw away this amendment.

Thank you.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I speak on amendment Nos. 4, 5 and 7. With regard to the first, that is to say, amendment No. 4, I want definitely to fix a time limit within which the price-page schedule will come into operation, that is to say, a date within which the Government must fix prices and pages of newspapers. Now, I have suggested a date, namely, October 1st this year. I give the Government about a month and a half to finally make up its mind. There is no reason why it should not be possible within this period to fix the price of newspapers. *The Government have

taken one year after the debate in this House of the Press Commission report and we are told that they had a number of discussions with various interested parties. If so, why has it not been possible even to get this ready before they came here with this Bill? It is strange that the Government is taking so much time over this matter. When, suggested the time-limit the hon. Minister avoided this thing and he said he would remain vague on this subject. I am prepared to withdraw my amendment if he gives some kind of definite idea. He need not name an exact date, but I would like to have some definite idea about it. I would here point out that a time limit is fixed even for bigger things like nuclear research and atomic research. If it is possible to fix a time limit in such cases, in such a simple thing as fixing newspaper price, it should not have been at all difficult for our great Government to do it, even in the course of the last two years, after the debates in Parliament. It does not speak well of the efficiency of the Government.

Only it speaks adversely of the initiative on the part of those in authority who deal with this matter. I hope that the hon. Minister, Dr. Keskar, will not be open to such a charge. Therefore, he should give an assurance with regard to the time. He should give us a rough idea with regard to the time, say, two months or two and a half months or even three months possibly. If he is in a difficulty to fix a time limit—not the kind of vague difficulty—if there are some people standing in the way, then he should take the House into confidence and tell what is exactly coming in the way.

Then, Sir, with regard to amendment No. 5 here we want certain additions. That is to say, Government is assuming under this clause certain powers with regard to certain matters. We would like this also to added "and for the amount of commission in cash or otherwise that might be given to agents for the sale of newspapers or for the canvassing of advertisements". This is very important. I am not against investing him with powers, even though he progresses at a very slow pace. I would like the Minister to assume power because it is important to regulate the commissions to fix the commissions, whether they are paid to the newspaper vendors who sell the papers or to the people who canvass advertisements. Unless you adopt some measures of restriction over this issue you are not going to control these people, because some papers pay very high com-

mission to their sales agents. And as you know, sometimes the sales agents find it profitable to sell the paper in the waste-paper market and get money out of it. I gave an example how it is profitable to sell the paper as waste-paper and make money out of it. This is done with a view to increasing circulation; not only increasing circulation but also showing false accounts about circulation and getting more advertisements and thus advancing the business side of the paper. That is to say, how to get more money and all that.

Then, Sir, about advertisements the same thing is true, as small papers are left to the mercies of the advertising concerns. I think some such restriction should be there. At present the bigger papers pay high commissions with a view to injuring the interests of the smaller papers and also for establishing and maintaining their monopoly. Therefore, this amendment should be accepted. In some cases the commission comes to even forty per cent or fifty per cent. It is stated in the Report of the Press Commission itself. Now, I should say that it should not be in any case more than 25 per cent or even less. You fix up this thing but power should be there. Unless you have the power you cannot fix the rates of commission, the ruling on this. That is why I want the Government to take powers.

Then, Sir, I come to amendment No. 7. Now here you will see that subclause (2)(b) of clause 3 says; while dealing with the orders that Government may make: "and also for supplements or special editions of newspaper issued on special occasions;". That is to say, in such cases the Government may waive the general rule and make certain accommodation. Now it is very, very vague indeed. First of all we do not know what they mean by "special occasions". It is not defined. Then it seems that in some cases for supplement of this sort more pages might be allowed and certain newspapers may be allowed to put in 36, 40 or 46 pages. There is no bar to it. Now, the hon. Minister would say that he would not abuse his powers. Even if I were to take him in at his word, what is the guarantee that in the next general election there will not be a successor who would do such a thing? When we are dealing with legislation it is important to see that the provisions of the law guarantee against abuse. Sometimes we do not do this and we come to grief. Therefore it is all the more important, because the Press

Commission itself on page 97 has pointed out very clearly—and I repeat it—as to how this should be discouraged. "The adoption of a price-page schedule as suggested by us in Chapter IV should serve to stop the indiscriminate issue of supplements." I think the Press Commission took a very serious view of the supplements. I am not against supplements as such. There may be occasions when supplements should be brought out. There may be good supplements. I am not saying that there may not be any good supplements at all, but these should be covered within the general order which should make provision for such supplements, which should make accommodation for such supplements. The Government should not arm itself with the powers, where it can waive the general rule and accommodate waive business who propose to bring out supplements. The trouble with our supplements is that there is a lot of rubbish brought out, things that are not at all of any use from the point of view of journalism or for newspaper interests. The hon. Minister said the readers want it. I would ask him how many readers of newspapers read some of the supplements that are brought out, say, by the "Statesman" in the engineering supplement, coalmines supplement, all types of supplements? But they find some occasion to bring out certain supplements and they are free, of course. And then they push the smaller people out and they carry on a very unfair and unequal competition. I say one should take a serious view of this matter when making a theory of supplement. In this particular case it is most regrettable that this provision should be there which in spirit and letter defeats an expressed recommendation and approach of the Press Commission itself. I would like the hon. Minister, when he replies to this particular amendment of mine, to make the position absolutely clear. The press are interested to know what he would say on this matter. There has been a lot of vagueness, a lot of prevarication, a lot of hide and seek with regard to this matter. I would like him to be straightforward and come forward and state for once that he would not in any case give any such undue accommodation to the big papers.

(Time bell rings.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That will do Mr. Gupta.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: And secondly that he will always protect the interests of the smaller paper and he will go into the question of supplements

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta.] from the point of view whether they are really in the interests of the newspaper readers and are in the interests of the country and of our democratic thinking. Such things should be taken into consideration and he must not remain vague. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to be a little clear and precise on such subjects. We should not be left guessing.

(Time bell rings.)

But it is most disappointing that even when a small Bill is brought out, the hon. Minister is vague. Well, what prevents him from saying that he will not use this power in favour of the big business, against the interests of the smaller papers, and when the question was put by some of our friends.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dr. Keskar.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: He can easily

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That will do, Mr. Gupta.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Sir, I shall be very brief in my reply to the amendments that have been moved by my hon. friends here. Regarding the amendment about the Press Council of India, about consulting the various bodies, the Press Councils, about bringing it to Parliament—as I said, it will only mean that this will add to the rigidity of the schedule and will create difficulties and uncertainties, and we do not think that it is practicable to do so. Regarding Parliament. I had already expressed in detail the reasons why we consider that it will not be at all right or fair. Of course, some Members say that Parliament might have to say something, Parliament is supreme. Even if something is not placed before Parliament and is done by Government, anybody can come before Parliament and question what the Government is doing and get the Parliament to cancel it. That power is there, it will always be there, and nobody can take it away. That is inherent. Putting this thing before Parliament by law will create in the mind of the industry uncertainty about the schedule—whether a schedule will be framed by voting after discussion, or rather by having a negotiation with them and finding out exactly as to what schedule will give the best result. There is a big difference in this. It is not practicable to accept the first thing. When we say schedule, it creates in the minds of hon. Members a very big chart of regulations and

rules. It is nothing like that. It is a small thing giving the prices at which a number of papers or a particular paper may sell. That is all, and nothing more, in the schedule itself. Mr. Bhupesh Gupta has again reiterated his demand for fixing a time-limit. I might say that probably things will be even quicker if we do not fix a time-limit, and I do not want to be one of those who gives a time-limit and afterwards comes to this House and says that we are not able to do it within this time, please extend the time. I would rather like to do it quickly-

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: If it will be quicker that way, then I withdraw my amendment.

SHRI B. V. KESKAR: I will certainly try to be quicker. You can rest assured that I sincerely mean it. The other thing is regarding the amount of commission in cash that can be given in respect of the sale of newspapers, in respect of canvassing advertisements, and so on. I agree that this is an important matter. It can affect prices very easily. We did try to see whether it is possible to put a check to this also, but from the practical point of view it is a very difficult, nearly impossible, thing for the Government to do. If it was a regular trade organisation, it might have been able to do it. I would like to draw your attention that in this commission business every newsboy will have to be checked and controlled as to what commission he is being given, which means that Government will have to set up a separate organisation to look into this. Even then I do not know whether we would be able to get exactly the facts that we should. Ultimately after examining carefully this question we felt that this was something which would be extremely difficult from the practical point of view of the Government to carry out and it had better be left....

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why not fix a general ceiling ? Then, if there is any violation, you can check it.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: We cannot check it. We do not want to check something which we cannot check effectively, and we feel that this had better be left to the trade organisations, to the Press Councils and other bodies which will really see that fair practices prevail regarding this matter. So, it is really the practical difficulty which comes in the way, and I think the practical difficulty is insuperable. It is extremely difficult to carry out such a check.

Then, Sir, about amendment No. 7 dealing with supplements, I think he did not hear me when I said that the supplements to which we have made a reference have nothing to do with commercial supplements, and we would definitely see that commercial supplements do not get any sort of concession here.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why not in that case you yourself initiate an amendment here making it clear that commercial supplements will not be covered by this ?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I think that my assurance on the floor of the House should be enough, and the hon. Member can impeach me if any such thing is done later.

Dr. Gour has been very persuasive and he has tried to show me that in reality he is trying to help me. I do agree that he is trying to help me and strengthen my hands. But the difficulty is that by the suggestion he is making regarding Parliament, the object will not after all be achieved. If he thinks that by putting it before Parliament it will stop Government from doing something wrong, that power is always there. Parliament can impeach Government whenever it likes, but I would like to draw his attention to the objective that we have before us, that we want a practical schedule to be operative, and I might assure him that it will become very difficult and it will lead to all sorts of complications if a schedule is published and kept pending for a number of weeks. It is discussed here and might be changed here, pressure is brought to get votes for this schedule or that—it will do the greatest harm to the industry and not what he really wants to do.

The other point is association of working journalists and newspaper editors. There I am afraid I do not agree with him. With the best of intentions I sympathise with what he wants to convey. But the fixing of the price of a paper pertains to the business side of the paper and not to the editorial policy. [have no doubt that it is those who run the papers, that is, the business managers and even the proprietors whom Mr. Gupta was again denouncing, who have to do with this question and who must be consulted, at least be given a fair hearing before we take any action. I do not think that the working journalists, however much they might be concerned with the circulation or the make-up of a

paper, have anything to do with the business side of the paper.

DR. R. B. GOUR: On the question of the space to be allotted for advertisement matter, there of course the editors and the working journalists are interested.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: The percentage of the advertisements is a question of general policy decision and has nothing to do with working journalists or editors as such. So, I feel, Sir, that, with the best intentions, I will not be able to accept his amendments. I do not think that the objective that we have in view would be better served by accepting any of these amendments. It might in fact increase the complications.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

1. "That at page 2, line 33, after the word 'consult' the words 'the Press Council of India, if any, and' be inserted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

2. "That at page 2, after line 35, the following be inserted, namely:—

'(5) Any order made under this section shall, as soon as possible after it is made, be laid before both Houses of Parliament, and shall be subject to such modifications as Parliament may make during the session in which it is so laid.'"

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What about your amendment No. 4, Mr. Gupta ?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: If I have understood the hon. Minister aright, it might come into force sooner than envisaged in my amendment. On that understanding I am prepared to withdraw it.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I said that it might even come before that.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I withdraw my amendment and I hope my expectation will come true.

*Amendment No. 4, was, by leave, withdrawn.

♦For text of amendment vide col. 1289 *supra*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is :

5. "That at page 2, at the end of line 14, after the word 'therein' the words 'and for the amount of commission in cash or otherwise that might be given to agents for the sale of newspapers or for the canvassing of advertisements' be inserted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

7. "That at page 2, lines 22 to 24, the words 'and also supplements or special editions of newspapers issued on special occasions' be deleted." The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

8. "That at page 2, line 33, for the words 'associations of publishers' the words 'associations of journalists, working journalists, newspaper editors' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

9. "That at page 2, after line 35. the following be inserted, namely:—

'(5) An order under this section shall be placed before both Houses of Parliament at the first opportunity after the order is passed.' "

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question, is:

10. "That at page 2, after line 35. the following be inserted, namely:—

'(5) Every order made under this section shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as may be, and shall be subject to such modifications as may be made by the Houses on a motion in this regard within a period of fourteen days from the date on which the order was laid on the Table of the Houses.

Provided that if the House or the Houses are not in session during any such period, such period shall not be taken into consideration in computing the fourteen days."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That clause 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 3 was added to the Bill.

Clauses 4 and 5 were added to the Bill.

Clause 6—Penalties SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I move:

6. "That at page 3, after line 13, the following proviso be inserted, namely:—

'Provided that where a newspaper is convicted for a second or subsequent offence, the court shall also order the forfeiture of an amount equivalent to the gross revenue of the newspaper attributable to the excess pages published.' "

(The amendment also stood in the name of Shri Perath Narayanan Nair.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The clause and the amendment are now before the House.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, here in this amendment I want to add this proviso to the clause dealing with penalties. Now, this is a very logical, simple and salutary amendment, because if by violating the law a person makes any profits and draws revenues, he is not entitled to have his ill-gotten money. Whatever he has got in contravention of the provisions of law, has got to be forfeited, and since the penal clauses are generally very very liberal, I do not think there will be any objection on the part of the hon. Minister to accept this amendment. Otherwise what will happen? They will violate the law and make huge and enormous profits and they will escape by paying a few hundred rupees as fine and they will get away with it. Therefore we should make it very very clear to them and tell them that if they will gain anything by violating the law, they will be liable to pay that entire profit as fine. I hope the hon. Minister will accept this amendment.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Sir, though what Mr. Gupta says might be desirable, yet the practical difficulties are enormous. To calculate all these things will be a

very difficult job, and we might require an accountant to sit and do this work, and moreover, Sir, every time it might lead to litigation and all that. Therefore, Sir, although I sympathise with the intention of Mr. Gupta, yet I cannot accept his amendment because of some practical difficulties involved.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

6. "That at page 3, after line 13, the following proviso be inserted, namely:—

'Provided that where a newspaper is convicted for a second or subsequent offence, the court shall also order the forfeiture of an amount equivalent to the gross revenue of the newspaper attributable to the excess pages published.'

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That clause 6 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 6 was added to the Bill.

Clause 7 was added to the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title, extent and duration

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I move:

"That at page 1, line 7 to 11 be deleted."

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The clause and the amendment are now before the House.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Sir, the question is that a number of things can be said in favour of and against the price-page schedule. As I said, the price-page schedule for giving protection against unfair competition is something quite new that is being tried, and to place it permanently on the Statute Book would not be desirable. We would rather like to try it, and if it succeeds, then certainly we can have it on a permanent footing, and therefore, Sir, I do not think any point is gained by saying that it should be there permanently on the Statute Book.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

3. "That at page 1, lines 7 to 11 be deleted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That clause 1 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and the Enacting Formula were added to the Bill.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Sir I move: "That the Bill be passed."

Sir, while moving that the Bill be passed, I do not want to say anything particular, because this is a very small Bill, and the objects are also quite limited. We have exhausted all the arguments whether in favour of the Bill or against the Bill. I do not want to repeat the same thing again and again. I hope that the Bill when passed will serve the purpose for which it has been brought forward and will help the smaller and the less well-placed newspapers in developing themselves and in making themselves more and more prosperous. I hope that it will help our newspaper industry as a whole.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: Sir, the main object for which this Bill has been brought before the House is to protect the interests of smaller newspapermen as against the bigger and richer newspapers. I wish godspeed to the Minister for Information and Broadcasting for paying his attention to this laudable object.

This tendency, Sir, on the part of the supreme Parliament to be delegating its powers so frequently to the executive Government may prove to be a very dangerous weapon in the conditions other than those which exist.

And therefore I would warn all the hon. Members of this House to see that this weapon is used properly.

Sir, the newspaper industry is a very big and a very money-spending industry. It is a national industry also, and since so many interests are involved in it, it is very difficult in such a hot haste to

[Shri H. P. Saksena] rush this Bill and to feel satisfied that all that we had any power to do and all that was required of us to do has been done. I am personally not at all satisfied with the manner in which we rush up this important Bill without even understanding what we are striving for and what great responsibility we are discharging. That is a matter which should have been calmly and dispassionately considered. This House is delegating all the powers that the Government requires to be delegated, without any hesitation and without any hitch, and therefore I am satisfied that this Bill which deals with the price-page question will do good to the industry of newspapers and to the newspapermen as a class. I am not still free from doubt as to how the different sizes of the various newspapers will be standardised. Now, Sir, there are newspapers which are printed on the rotary machine having the size of twelve inches by eight inches per each page. And there are smaller newspapers of smaller sizes. Now, how are these different sizes of the newspapers going to be reconciled and standardised?

Another difficulty to which I drew the attention of the hon. Minister and which he treated very lightly was the

space occupied by advertisements in newspapers. That also should be included in the number of pages allowed and the price to be calculated. These are matters which I trust and hope will be taken into consideration when the price-page schedule is fixed.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Mr. Saksena has both blessed and criticised the Bill. I take his blessings, and will pay full heed to his criticisms and try to correct what ever mistakes he has pointed out. What else can I say? On the whole I find that he supports the Bill and has given his good wishes for the success of the Bill. That is what matters.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed." The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. on Thursday.

The House then adjourned at twelve minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Thursday, the 16th August 1956.