♦MOTION RE THE REPORT OF THE PRESS COMMISSION— *continued*

THE; MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (DR. B. V. KESKAR) : Sir, I rise to continue my speech regarding the motion for consideration of the Report of the Press Commission.

Sir, during the last two or three years, the question of the press— whether it is the Press laws, whether it is the condition of the industry, or whether it is the condition of the working journalists—had been cropping up from time to time, and it was thought desirable to appoint a Commission to examine the general state of the press in the country, to consider the whole situation, and to make its suggestions and recommendations.

As you know, Sir, the Commission was appointed in October 1952, under the chairmanship of the late Justice Rajadhyaksha, with ten members. We had in the members a very distinguished set of citizens, eminent men in public life, journalists and experts, including Members of this House and also of the Lok Sabha. We can truly say that it was a very representative Commission. Though we had not given any specific directive to the Commission to finish its labours by a particular date, we had requested it to expedite the publication of its Report and its presentation to the Government a? soon as possible. The Report was submitted in July 1954, which mean? a little less than two years. In view of the tremendous amount of labour and research involved, I certainly consider, Sir, that the Commission laboured with expedition and despatch. When we view any work carried out by similar Commissions in other parts of the world, we can say that our Commission has shown promptness, and has shown a great desire to carry out its work as quickly as possible. That will be so even more, if we look at the conditions in India, which are very peculiar.

♦Continued from 7th April 1955.

The Commission at that time found that no reliable data was available regarding the Indian press of any kind whether it was the question of circulation, whether it was the question of the number of papers being published in the various languages, or any other matter of statistics—and one of the most difficult tasks that faced the Commission was the gathering together of all the data that was necessary for it in order to come to some tentative conclusions. That work, I think, lengthened very much 1 the work of the Commission. Other wise, I am sure that we would have been able to get the Report even much earlier than we had got.

Sir, the Commission, in the matter of gathering all this data—this research work—has rendered a further signal service to the country, because it has prepared the first history of journalism in India, a very valuable document, and in fact, the first of its kind, which will certainly serve as a kind of beacon for further research workers, and for those who want to amplifv on the subject and write bigger and more detailed works regarding the state and history of journalism in our country.

Sir, I would not like to proceed further without paying my unstinted tribute to the late. Chairman, under whose distinguished guidance, the Press Commission carried out its work. Though I knew him a little before he took up this important work, I had my main contact with him during the course of the work of the Commission, and I have no hesitation in saying that in him we had not on[1]^ a very distinguished and competent Chairman, but also a great personality, learned, fair and impartial, and of the highest integrity. It is a great loss to the country that soon after the Commission's work was over, and while he was engaeeH in carrying out another very difficult enquiry which the Government had entrusted him with, he passed away. I have reasons to believe that hi« health, though not the best, further deteriorated due to the great ever-

ons that he had to undergo during ihe course of the work of the Commission. So, to that extent, he is a martyr to the Press Commission. We also lost the able Secretary of the ■Commission a few months after the Commission took over. So we found a number of victims on the way who died while doing their work for the Commission.

The Commission, Sir, in its general report, has dealt with a very large number of recommendations. The Report is an account of the state of the Indian press, and it contains, with regard to certain specific matters, recommendations, and there are other matters regarding which there are pertain observations made. There are •several suggestions in the Report. And if I might say so, they have even made certain requests. The Report •itself runs into more than 590 pages. There is also the appendix. And there is also another appendix attached to the Report giving the history of journalism. The recommendations contained in the Report are quite varied and complex, and concern matters •which are quite different from each •other. For example, the Report deals with questions like the starting of a newsprint factory and the pay of working journalists, and all the rest of it. All sorts of questions are dealt with by the Commission. It is therefore not surprising, if the Commission has taken some time for consideration. I say this because there has been criticism levelled by many friends here who are keenly appreciative and enthusiastic about the Report, as they should be, and who are eao;er that the Report, or that part of Jit which they consider desirable, •should be implemented as soon as -possible. Now, Sir, while supporting their desire—I myself feel the same way—it has not been possible for such a complex and all-embracing • Report to be implemented. There are certain recommendations which will have to be implemented. But certain suggestions were so important that it was necessary to consult all the interests concerned before we could come to any tentative conclusion about them. For example, in most of the matters, it is not simply the Press which is concerned. Owners and proprietors of newspapers, the proprietors of newspapers, the proprietors of printing presses and the working journalists—they are all concerned no doubt but there are also the State Governments because we have to remember that the press is not simply a Central subject. It is dealt with by the State Governments in various ways. The printing presses are registered by the States, the newspapers are also registered by the States. There is also the question of Press correspondents and their accredition, the advertisements and so many other matters in which the State Governments deal with the subject in as large a measure as the Central Government itself and therefore it was essential to consult the State Governments. It was also essential to consult the other private interests concerned, for example, the owners and proprietors of newspapers, the working journalists and get their views regarding the Commission's recommendations. All this took time. I am sorry that it took 4 months' time but I submit that in a matter of such importance, it is better to proceed slowly and surely rather than to proceed in haste and afterwards repent at leisure or try to retract from what we have decided upon, upon, and Government therefore took sufficient time to get. the views of all the people concerned. We went even further. After getting the views of all these bodies and the States concerned, when we formed some tentative conclusions, we again took the precaution of getting the interests, for example, the working journalists and the proprietors again together in order to communicate to them what we felt after having considered all the material before us and again inviting them to give their reactions and trying to see if there is any possibility of reconciling both the interests concerned to come to, if possible, a unanimous conclusion. This naturally took time and I hope the House, after seeing all the procedure that we have

[Dr. B. V. Keskar.] gone through, will agree with me that the delay is not too great in view of the importance of the matter involved.

I would like here in the beginning, not to digress too much or speak on the various recommendations. Before we wanted to draw up our definite conclusions regarding the Commission's recommendations, we wanted an opportunity of getting the views of Parliament before finalizing anything. I am sorry that it was not possible, in the very year of the Commission's report or its publication, to have had a debate in this House and the other House so that we could have had the benefit of the views of the Members on this matter, but thought it was late for various reasons, we did not want to come to conclusions before hearing the views of this august body. The matter is important. It concerns not simply the printers or newspapers or the working journalists. In my opinion it concerns even more the general public because the press is an organ of public opinion or at least they claim to be the organ of public opinion and the public is very vitally concerned in this matter and Parliament, as the forum of the elected representatives of public opinion should have a say and therefore we deferred coming to any decision until we had had the considered views of both the Houses.

The recommendations which the Sabha will have to consider here are many in number and of different varieties and categories. I have tried to tabulate some of the important recommendations. It is not possible to give all of them. There are 120 recommendations or suggestions in all. There is, for example, the question of the Advertisement Council. Also there is the question of—rather important— of foreign ownership of Indian newspapers. There is also the Commis- I sion's suggestion for encouraging a \ larger number of newspapers in the i country. There is the important question of having a price-page schedule for protecting the small and mediu. papers. There is also the rather disputed question of privileges of Legislatures and Parliament *vis-a-vis* the ppsss.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU (Uttar Pradesh): You might leave that out for the present.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I am only mentioning the Commission's suggestions.-I will certainly come later to what the Government is doing about it. There is also a suggestion for a Press Council and the service conditions of working journalists, the question of monopolies, concentration of ownership, etc. in the newspaper industry, Government advertisements and tariffs for those advertisements, rules for press arcredition *vis-a-vis the* Government, the organizations of news agencies in the country more especially of P.T.I, and the U.P.I., the important question of the adequate supply of newsprint for our newspaper industry, the necessity for a Press Registrar responsible for the collection of statistics and facts and figures regarding. the industry. There is also the objectionable advertisements and many other minor suggestions and recommendations. Members might see that in view of these important recommendations—there are a very large number of suggestions and recommendations—I would like to have their views regarding these matters or those of them which they consider important so that it will help the Government to come to definite conclusions. The recommendations can be divided into about 2 or 3 categories. There are those which are meant for the industry in general as suggestions. In those matters, I hope the industry after having carefully considered the report of the Commission, have profited by that or are trying to profit by that. Let us hope so. There are other things which are mainly for the journalists—about the standard of journalism, ethics of journalism and the responsibility of a journalist and certain other matters' which it is for the journalists to pon-—

der over and po
nder over carefully. There are those which are meant for the Government to take action upon. There are of course those which require legislation and those which require simple executive action. As far .as executive action is concerned, I had laid on the Table of the Sabha a : statement last year in which we had given in detail the actual position regarding most of the recommendations and also what action had been taken where Government executive action was expected. I will later also inform the Sabha as to what further action has been taken. At present Government is engaged very seriously in considering the 4 or 5 of the most important recommendations and I hope that it will come to a decision within this week and the decision :has been held up in order to hear the views of this House and if, in any way, it is necessary for us even to modify our decisions in the light of the discussions here, we are prepared to do, so. I would therefore not at the very beginning give what Government feels about the important recommendations. I would, with your permission, do so after I have heard the learned views of the hon. Mem-ibers assembled here. I might only .mention here the important recom-.mendations about which there is much controversy and on which I ihope hon. Members will shed more light. There is the important aues-:ion of the service conditions of working journalists, as also the constitution of the Press Council. Then there is the question of the price-page schedule, of news agencies as also the .question of foreign ownership of Indian papers. I would not like to take more time of the House at this moment, but with your permission, Sir, I will speak at length and in detail after hearing the views of hon. TMembers.

Sir, I move,

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Report of the Presi Commission be taken into consider-ation."

I have received notice of foui amendments. They may now be formally moved.

SHRI RAGHAVENDRARAO (Hyder-abad): Sir, 1 move:

1. "That at the end of the Motion the following be added, namely: —

'and having considered the same, this House recommends to the Government to immediately convene a conference, consisting of the representatives of all sections of the Press to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the problems raised by the Press Commission in their Report'."

BABU GOPINATH SINGH (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, I move:

2. "That at the end of the Motion, the following be added, namely: —

'and having considered the same, this House recommends to the Government to immediately take steps to implement the recommendations of the Press Commission with expedition'."

SHRI S. MAHANTY (Orissa): Sir, with your permission I move my amendment with a slight modification. I move:

3. "That at the end of the Motion the following be added, namely: —

'and having considered the same, this House is of opinion that—

(i) the Press Council should not be given statutory protection and powers;

(ii) the recommendations of the Commission relating to Press Law be referred to the Law Commission for review; and

[Shri S. Mahanty.]

(iii) legislation be promoted at the earliest in the light of the recommendations of the Commission relating to mini mum salary, leave, gratuity, bonus and conditions of work of the journalists'."

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore) : Sir, I move:

4. "That at the end of the Motion the following be added, namely: —

'and having considered the same, this House generally approves the recommendations of the Commission and requests the Government to take steps to implement the same as early as possible'."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion and the amendments are now before the House.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Mr. Chairman, I begin by congratulating the Press Commission for the extremely readable report that they have submitted to Parliament.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

The amount of labour, study, analysis and investigation which has gone into the production of this Report gives it a distinction above the usu?>l Blue Books which are published by Government. It has thrown a flood of light on the working of the newspaper industry in this country. It has exposed many a skeleton in the cupboard. The Press Commission has made many wholesome recommendations which I would only urge the Government to implement as early as possible. At the same time, I have to submit that the Commission has also made certain recommendations which, I should not hesitate to say, are retrograde.

First, I would come to one of the most important recommendation? of the Press Commission, namely, the one relating to the Press Council. This is one of the most important recommendations of the Commission, which aims at maintaining professional standards and ethics of journalism. If you will please look at page 514 of volume I of the Press Commission's Report, you will find that it has recommended that a CounniL should be set up and it will be charged with the following duties: Here I would like the House to examine the duties which have been specified in the recommendations of the Commission. In the first place it says that the Press Council should help the Press to maintain its independence. Secondly, it should ensure high, standard of public taste. Thirdly, i<-should regulate the conduct of the Press by formulation of a code of[1] journalistic ethics, to be followed by all, and to keep under review al. developments likely to restrict the-supply and dissemination of news of public interest. And lastly, it should improve the methods of recruitment,. education and training for the profession.

The Press Council is to consist of 25 persons, *plus* a Chairman who will be nominated by the Chief Justice of India, and at least thirteen working journalists will find place on the Council. These are the aims and this is the constitution of the Press Council.

Sir, these recommendations relating to the Press Council were received with mixed feelings, they received a mixed reception from the profession. Mr. G A. Johnson, Editor of "The Statesman", in an article written on the 23rd August 1954, writes as follows:

"The Commission in their recom mendation for the constitution of' the proposed Press Council show"* marked distrust of the ability of the Press to control its own affairs."

Another paper "The Searchlight" in its editorial dated the 27th July 1954 observes as follows: —

"It is strange that extraneous elements which would not be tolerated either by the Bar Council or by the medical Council should be sought to be foisted on the proposed Press Council."

TITV/AN HHAMAN LALL (Punjab): *a a 3K r Council running any paper?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I could not quite hear what my hon. friend there said. The South Indian Journalists' Federation is also opposed to the prin ciple of giving as much as 50 per cent, representation to non-journalists on the nroDosed Press Council and called it Dernicious.

I only brought all these views to the notice of the House to give an indication of the fact that these recommendations were not received with unanimity by the profession itself. But my main opposition to the proposed constitution of the Council is that it runs counter to another recommendation of the Press Commission itself. Let me invite the attention of the House to that very worthwhile recommendation which occurs at page 479 of the Report, volume 1. It runs as follows:

"There is, however, an excessive tendency to consider the Press as a means of publicity for certain selected activities of the State or for certain individuals and, insufficient importance is attached to the functioning of the Press as reporter and interpreter acting for the people."

I would like the House to dispassionately consider these two recommendations side by side. The Commission recommends certain attitudes to be adopted by Government to see that newspapers in this country are not made the handmaid of Government publicity. On the other hand, it. recommends that there should be a Press Council, a Press Council whose Chairman is to be nominated by the Chief Justice of India and probably whose membership up to 5^ per cent, would consist of officials. Sir, to say the least, this runs counter to the Commission's recommendation to make the Press free. If anything, I I feel that the Press Council, with sta tutory powers of direction will fur- 1 ther interfere with the freedom of the I Press and will pervert its status and i will certainly derogate from i+s dig- 1 nity.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Where arc the officials going to be elected from

SHRI S. MAHANTY: The P*.. Council will be constituted with 2o members and it will have at least 13 working journalists, the rest 1?, I presume,* will be officials.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: T would request the hon. Member to rer.d the whole thing very carefully.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I have rtad it. If necessary, I will read it *a.pain.* It is on page 514 where it is said that the Press Council should consist of persons who will command the general confidence and respect of the profession and should have 25 members, plus a Chairman who will be nominated by the Chief Justice of India. At least 13 members should be - working journalists. That specific limit of 13 has been kept and the re?t 12 may be officials, commanding the respect of the profession. I do not dispute that.

I do not dispute it; none-the-less, the fact remains to be said that 13 will be working journalists while the rest may be taken from persons outside the profession. That is whf» 1 was going to say. If the Press vents a council sponsored by Government to help maintain its independence, according to the wording of the Press Commission's Report, that Press, I think, is not worth its salt. If we require a Government-sponsored council with statutory powers to control and regulate the taste of the public, I think, with all respect to Dr. Keskar, it is sowing the seeds of totalitarianism. It may be that today we are fortunate in having an Information Minister like Dr. Keskar

[Shri S. Mahanty.] with liberal views but who knows, Dr. Goebles may step in after Dr. Kes-kar quits. Therefore, the question is, why should the hon. Minister say that he is chary of acting, lest it should impinge on the freedom of the Press whenever it comes to the price-page schedule or to the other aspects relating to the Press?

DR. B. V. KESKAR; Where coes the Government of India com « in when the Chief Justice nominates the Chairman?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: My hon. friend knows it and we also know it Let us not discuss all those things here on the floor of the House. Government comes in by giving this Pres'j Council statutory power and protection.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: It vrill cme in here today even.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I do ret stint it but that is my apprehension ;.> c[1] I am discharging a public duty by voicing that apprehension. I think my hon. friend would like the Secretary and the Deputy Secretaries of his Ministry also to be included in this Press Council; they certainly command the confidence of the profession, i do not grudge it but what I am trying to point out is th\;: If the Press in free India wants the relp and support of a Government-sponsored Council to maintain its independence, I only submit that that Press is not worth its salt.

The U.K. Royal Commission considered this question at some length. We all know what standard the- piess in U.K. generally maintains; we also know, with all respect to the Members of the Press Commission, that the Press Commission has been influenced to a very great extent by the U. K. Commission's Report on the Press. It might interest the hon. Min- J ister as well as the Housa to learn that this question came up for discussion in the House of Commons in July of this year. On July 14 of this year, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, Sir Anthony Eden said, "I find it hard to see how statutory powers could be effectively arranged which would not have some effect on the freedom of the press which, I think, this country would be chary of accepting". This is the view of the British Prime Minister. I do not say that whatever views he expresses snould be followed by us witnout any examination but the fact remains that such a Press Council will further interfere with the freedom of the Press and I feel that the apprehensions of the British Prime Minister were very well reasoned. This Press council, as I can see, will sit over the heads of the Indian Press with a mother-in-law attitude and will constantly interfere with the Press which certainly has every reason to feel like a sensitive daughter-in-law. This is a kind of spoon-feeding. When it is said that the Press Council will have, as its most important function, the helping to maintain the independence of the Press, I think Sir, the case is being very much overdrawn. I pci^cra lly feel that Government has absolutely no business—whether it be the Press Council or the Government—to regulate the taste of the public; it has got no business whatsoever to regulate the conduct of the Press. The people who go to make the Press are much more responsible than persons \vho constitute the Government body, if I may say so.

KAZI KARIMUDDIN (Madhya Pradesh): Question.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: Question.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Now I will come to another retrograde recommendation of the Press Commission relating to the so-called yellow journalism.

This is the most demagogic view which the Commission has taken towards this aspect of the question. Even though they have adnvtte-: that the percentage of such scurrilous or obscene writing is restricted to a very microscopic proportion of the Indian

Press, none-the-less, they have suggested amendment of the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code to be proceeded with forthwith.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU: That has ' been done already.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: That only indicates the way the wind is blowing. ! The Home Minister said that they were awaiting the Report of the Press ; Commission and that, if nec

essary, it | would be possible to do without sucli j an amendment. Lo and behold, the Press Commission comes out with the j recommendation that the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act should be extended. That only shows how and where the wind was blowing. Anyway, the Press Commission itself has ■said, on page 39 of Volume I:

> "We must mention with regret that a great deal of the objectionable writing, scurrilous, obscene, indecent and personal does exist in the Indian Press though it is confined to the periodical Press, and the daily newspapers have been comparatively free from these evils. Many of these instances have come from a very small section of the periodical Press."

This is the view of the Press Commission; none-the-less, they have made a recommendation for the further abridgement of the fundamental freedom which has been guaranteed in the Constitution and Goverrment was very prompt in acting on those recommendations. We do not know when the hon. 'Home Minister will come here with amendments relating to the other existing legislations.

It would be worthwhile at this stage to go into the genesis of yellow journalism. It redounds to the credit of yellow journalism that the story of modern journalism in India, the story of the origin of journalism in India is a story of the so-called yellow journalism. Hon. Members might have read the 'History of Indian Press' which is one of the most extremely useful volumes published by the Press Commission. This has been compiled by an eminent journalist, Mr. Natara-jan. Hon. Members might have read it. It will be found that the earliest newspaper in India was an English journal. It was known as "Calcutta Gazette" and its editor was Mr. James Augustus Hicky. It is very interesting to go through the background of the Press of the 18th century.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: Why do you leave Mr. Boulton out?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I will come to him.

When that paper was published) Mr. Hicky was an employee of the East India Company. Those were the days when the concerns of the East India Company in India were considered as the close preserve of a handful of Directors in England and their few officers in India. Mr. Hicky took upon himself the task of exposing most ruthlessly many cases of commission and omission of the Company officers in India. In those days, Warren Hastings considered him—the word 'yellow journalism' was not there—an undesirable type of journalist and the punishment of extern-ment was meted out to him. He was not the single man. There was another and I think his name is William Duane. He published a paper, "Indian World" in 1791 and the same fate was meted out to him. In those days, journalists who had the misfortune of exposing certain persons in power and privilege were considered a% undesirable journalists and because they were British, they had to be externed.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: What is Mr. Mahanty's definition of "yellow journalism"?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I will come to that.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: Is he in any way an expert?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: My hon. friend has asked a very pertinent question, "What is the definition of yellow journalism?" If I were to ask him. "What is the definition of a "Wnite Cap?", will he be able to answer me?

PROF. R. D. SINHA DINKAR: A white cap is made of white cloth.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: If he refers to Chambers's Dictionary, he will find that this refers to a band of gang-t P.M. sters. T'lat is in Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary. Therefore there is nothing immutable in yellow or white. It is only our approach which gets coloured, whether it be white: or whether it be yellow.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Will you take more time, Mr. Mahanty?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Yes, Sir.

ME. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: At this stage I may inform hon. Members that I have got 18 names for today and 13 names for tomorrow. The complaint is that in the end Members get very little time. So I would request hon. Members to take as little time as possible.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I will take 25 minutes more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If necessary we will sit through the lunch hour tomorrow.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I make a submission, Sir. Tomorrow in your chamber let there be a discussion with regard to time, whether we can extend the {time-limit for this dis cussion, especially in view of the fact that the hon. Minister has said that the Government decision would be taken in the light of the opinions expressed in the other Hous~ and in this House. I think, Sir, it is neces sary therefore that the volume ©f opinions should be properly expres sed and the Members should be given a chance to sneak since the deci sion ....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: So all : the Members who want to speak may please restrict their speeches and you also Mr. Gupta.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I am not concerned with my speech or anything. I speak for all Members that proper time should be given.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If. : necessary we will sit through the- lunch hour tomorrow and the hon. Minister will reply the day after tomorrow.

The House stands adjourned tilL 2.30 in the afternoon.

The House then adjourned, for lunch at one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch-at half past two of the clock, Mu. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Mr. Deputy Chairman, before the House rose for- lunch, I was dilating *on* yellow journalism. In that context I mentioned; two names, that of James Augustus Hicky and William Duane, both o£ whom had to be externed from India. because the then Governors-General, considered the presence of those journalists in India a menace to their own^ acts of omission and commission. Now, I will also mention another famous name—James Silk Buckingham. This gentleman was a man of high moral integrity. I am giving a ba

ckground of his life to give the House an idea as to persons of what moral integrity have been considered*-as yellow journalists by the administrative authorities simply because their exposures did not suit the powers that be. This James Silk Buckingham was the Commander of a ship* and he surrendered his command of the ship which was carrying siaves to Madagascar. He was a man of that moral integrity. He landed in Calcutta and started a paper called "Calcutta Journal". The moto of his paper reads like this: "To admonish

the Governors of their duties, to warn them furiously of their faults and to tell them disagreeable truths." For this extremely noble sentiment the reward that was given to him was banishment from India. Sir, the same pattern prevails today also. In Volume II of the Report of the Press Commission relating to the History of the Indian Press mention has been made about the nature of the earliest Pi ess in India and the Government's attitude towards it. It has been said that under the Company's Adminis tration while some editors incurred the displeasure of important officials from the very beginning, and some others made no beginning at all for that reason, other editors were encouraged, financed and provided with material and other aid by influential senior officials of the Com pany. It pains me to say, Sir, that the same attitude prevails today. The same denunciation is the lot of those honest few who in public interest try to expose the many acts of omission and commission of the powers that be. Therefore I think that the Press Com mission should not have taken up such an attitude towards what they call the yellow Press. The hon. Min ister asked, 'What do you mean by yellow Press?' Yellow Press is a kind of journal or a newspaper which contains elements of scurrilous, mala fide and obscene writings. Now, we are all at one with the hon. Minister when he says that our Press should be free from such kind of writing, but my quarrel with him is wher. it comes to the attitude .....

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I have not said anything.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I was told that there is Cabinet responsibility. The Home Minister said that and therefore you also share that responsibility.

As I was saying, it is the kind of attitude of the Government with which I am quarrelling. Let us look at the U.K. I will read out presently a passage from the U.K. Royal Commission's Report on the British Press. They have said that in the U.K. the national popular papers with mass circulations contain elements of most scurrilous and sensational writings but even then the Royal Commission has not recommended special measures to curb those papers. Now, I am reading paragraph 496 of the Royal Commission's Report: "The triviality and sensationalism which we have criticised in previous paragraphs are principally apparent in the national popular papers with a mass circulation. Of the provincial papers the two with the largest circulations, the Daily Despatch and the Daily Record, have adopted a layout similar to that of the national popular papers but the majority are more sober in their appearance and in their approach to the news." So in England the national papers with mass circulations also contain elements which we call scur-rilous. Even the House might have known that the leading British papers were carrying sentimental stories of the British Princesses but those papers were not banned. No security was demanded from those papers. So what I would urge before the Government is that they should completely disabuse their mind of this menace of yellow journalism which is really very microscopic. They should not load the Statute Book with shabby legislation which relate to them because all the exposures which have been made and in which the Government Administration was involved, it must be remembered, were first published in papers which you call "yellow Press." This fact has also been taken notice of by the Press Commission itself. I therefore wonder how the Press Commission could make the following recommendation when they say on page 51 that even verifiable news affecting individuals shall not be published unless public interest demands its publication. Now, what agency is there to determine what quantum of public interest is there or not? Now, if it is left to an editor oi a journalist, certainly there will be a review in the court when under the various legislation the Government will refer the matter or take cogni-

[Shri S. Mahanty.3 sance of it. There are no objective criteria laid down anywhere to determine whether public interest exists or not. But the fact remains to be said that so long as there are yellow administrators, so long as there are yellow Ministers, so long as there are yellow men who permit our public life, yellow journalism is a social necessity. Of course, I am at one with them that the publications should not be *mala fide,* that it should not be scurrilous and whatever it will expose it will expose in public interest. But even to that extent, Sir, I am sorry to say that the recommendations of the Press Commission are most reactionary. Many of these Press laws were enacted in the late 18th century or early 19th century. These statutes still continue without ever being examined whether the necessity for them still exists or not. Therefore the entire rationale of these Press Laws should once again be reviewed by the Law Commission even though the Press Commission has spent a good deal of labour on them. At any rat?. the Law Commission will examine such laws also as were enacted in the last century when the British Government were there to curb the freedom of the Press. The Law Commission will certainly take note of it but to emphasise it further. I have moved an amendment that the laws relating to the freedom of the Press should once again be reviewed by the Law Commission in all objectivity.

Before I come to the next important recommendation relating to the working journalists, 1 would like to say a word or two about the Press Council. In the earlier part of my speech I opposed the idea of giving statutory protection and power to the proposed Press Council. Firstly, the Press Commission has not clearly indicated the manner in which such a Press Council should be formed. For instance, who will convene it? After the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court nominates a Chairman, who wllJ nominate the other 25 members? mn\at is the machinery contemplated? How will the Council be formed and what will be its precise function? Therefore I was very unwilling to give statutory power and protection to a body without having precise knowledge about it. I believe that thereby we will be creating a kind of Frankenstein. My concrete proposals about the Press Council are as follows.

In the rirst place, I would like that the Chairmanship should go to a man in the profession, a man who has given his life-blood to it, because after all it is not the Indian Big Money which has created Indian journalism. It is the sweating journalist who has given his life-blood to it. At least in honour of that profession, the Chairmanship should not go to a Judge but should go to a journalist, if statutory protection is being given at all.

Then, Sir, I would say that sixty per cent of the membership should be reserved for the working journalists; twenty per cent for public men of eminence; and the remaining twenty per cent for the newspaper owners and management. I have got every respect for the Judges but as a journalist, I feel that this idea is certainly repugnant to the entire profession. As for example, how would the Bar Council feel if a Doctor is made the Chairman of it? Or. how will an Institution of Engineers feel if a High Court Judge is made the Chairman there? Certainly, I do admit. I do concede, that the press also has relations with the society. Therefore, someone has to come in to determine that relationship between the society and the journalists. It is tru«, but why should we attribute to Judges all the human virtues? For everything that I see a High Court Judge has to be nominated. High Court Judges, when retired, are made Governors. Beginning from Governors up to the Chairmanship of the Press Council, no one is fit in India except a High Court Judge.

My second objection to it Is this and I still persist in it. We know already

—with all respect to the hon. Minis- | ter—so far as the All India Radio is concerned, we have got instances of what kind of regimentation of news goes on in the Ail India Radio news bulletins. Sir, the Government have got the All India Radio as a publicity medium and then through this Press Council,—of course. Dr. Keskar will never do it; I have got great regard for and faith in him, I am not speak-ing in joke, I am speaking in all seriousness—but there is no guarantee. What guarantee is there that others also may not come and use this Press . Council as a subterfuge to gag all kinds of opposition views in this country?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: What is the relationship between All India Radio and the Press Council?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I am sorry if the hon. Minister has not understood; the relationship is this: AH India Radio news bulletins, I said. We are perfectly aware, we have experienced ourselves, what kind of regimentation of news goes dn in the All India Radio news bulletins. As for example, if a Parliamentary Secretary in any State Government opens a tea shop, that news features in the All India Radio news bulletins; but if we will be breaking our heads over things which according to them may not be in the public interests, then there will be no mention of it in the All India Radio news bulletins.....

DR. B. V. KESKAR: What about the Press Council?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: That is what I am telling. In the Press Council there will be regimentation.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mahanty, you have exceeded your time of thirty minutes.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Sir. I told you that 1 wanted 25 minutes more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That means you will be cutting out the time of other Members. You have already taken 35 minutes.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I am sorry, Sir. I have taken only 25 minutes so far.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Twenty minutes before lunch and fifteen minutes now.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Anyway, Sir, you will not stint us, nor will Dr. Keskar stint us a few minutes more.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: The Chair is the Master here.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: So, now coming to the working journalists, the Indian newspaper industry has proved very profitable. Though it has proved very profitable, so far it has paid very scant attention to the working journalists who have really laboured, slaved, to build the industry. Now, if you look at the total working force of the journalists, they constitute only eight per cent. I am told that according to the figures of the IENS, the total income from advertisements of 84 newspapers in thei year 1954 amounted to Rs. 2'31 crores. This advertisement revenue does not take into account the advertisements received from the Government or from local sources. This advertisement revenue refers only to advertisements received from the commercial houses. Even then the industry still continues the plea of lack of means, lack of finance. Now, in this context, it will be very interesting to learn how the foreign journalists look at the living conditions or the economic conditions of Indian journalists. Sir, in the "Manchester Guardian" dated 20th July, 1954, its Bombay correspondent wrote: "Most Indian journalist? actually earn so little, that one wonders at press conferences how they keep body and soul together." Certainly, I would urge on the hon. Minister with all humility that he should take some definite^ steps—by statutorily laying down a minimum wage, and improving other working conditions—to see that such disparity does not exist. At least blot out such kinds of disparity. Such kinds of remarks do not do anv honour either to our country or to-' our Government.

[Shri S. Mahanty.]

Then, Sir, the Commission also had found out that in the English newspapers there were more working journalists than in the vernacular newspapers; but the average emolument in the case of language newspapers was only Rs. 150 per men-•sem; whereas the average monthly emolument in the case of English newspapers was in the neighbourhood of Rs. 350. Now, this kind of invidious discrimination should also be eliminated and to that extent, therefore, statutory fixation of minimum wage becomes very important.

Then, Sir, the language newspapers also cannot plead lack of finance, because we know that some language newspapers have maintained parity in emoluments with English newspapers when it comes to the salary of the General Managers or the Managing Editors. Therefore, when it comes to the question of working journalists, this plea should not be entertained. Another fact we have to remember is that we have set before us as our ideal that English language should be replaced by our national language. Now, is it the kind of impetus that we are giving to the national language, by starving and keeping language journalists at a level which is much below the emoluments paid to journalists in English newspapers? Therefore, I once again urge that this question should receive more thorough consideration at the hands of the hon. Minister.

Yesterday I received a whole packet full of cuttings of the Indian newspaper industry owners as regards their finance. They pleaded lack of finance. My only reply to that will 'be that the newspaper industry has not only the financial profijt >as its aim. It is true that a newspaper industry must have all the prerequisites like any other industry. In ran industry the investor is satisfied ras long as he gets his profit. But in th case of the newspaper industry,■not only the newspaper owner gets the profits but also gets politicaladvantage. Now, I am reminded of what Lord Beaverbrook, that great chain newspaper owner, said. He was asked by the U.K. Royal Commission on the Press: "Why do you run your papers?" Lord Beaverbrook said: "I run the papers purely for the purpose of making propaganda and for no other motive." Now, our Indian newspaper magnates do not run these newspapers for profit alone. Otherwise, if the profit motive alone is there, how the "Times of India" publishes 12 pages for *1*\ annas, I would like to know. If we look into the finances of a number of newspapers, we will find that definitely they are running at a loss. They may be running at a loss, but they have got those newspapers alive to have their own political interests served. Thereiore, the question of finance should least weigh with the Government.

Now, they have fixed statutorily a minimum wage, I think, for bank employees. Why should not that principle be stretched in the case of the journalists?

Then Sir .....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You should close now.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Within five minutes, Sir .....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have taken 40 minutes. There are so many speakers, I told you. 18 speakers have to speak today.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: All right, Sir. But before I resume my seat—of course, I have got many more points— I must say that I am in favour of the recommendations of the Commission in respect of the price-page schedule.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, we have come to an age not only of tabloid journalism, but of tabloid speeches also.

Sir, we have long waited for this debate. Last session the motion was moved, but the hon. Minister's mind was not made up. The long-awaited debate, like a shy maiden, passed us

by. It has at last come to us, and we •can discuss the Press Commission's Report today. The hon. Minister has seen and witnessed the tempo and the .temper of the other House.

Sir, in these days when our speech-■es have to be fashioned on a time that is rationed by the Chair, it will be very difficult for me to go through all that I have read during the last three months. Nevertheless, I will try to keep my eye on the clock and -request you, Sir, not to ring the bell, lest I should lose my thoughts.

Sir, I want to begin with a little lesson to the Publications Division. They should take a little lesson on how to bind the various Repor+s. Bookbinding is the elementary lesson that they must learn. Here is the Royal Commission's Report. You can see how it opens, and how it can be turned. Here is our Press Commission Report; it has to be torn to bits in order to be able to study it thoroughly.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Mrs. Alva is perhaps making a mistake. The Reports of the Government of India are not the responsibility of the Publications Division, but of an authority known as the Manager of the Government Press.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: Anyway, i;hen we legislators here shall appeal to whoever is responsible for the book-binding that our Budget Reports, other important Committee reports and the Commissions' Reports should come better-bound, so that we can sometimes relax in our beds and study Ahem.

Sir, one must not forget the history of the press. But before that, let me speak about the Press Commission.

We are grateful to the Prime Minister who took so much interest in ihis Report, and who even now is paying so much attention. We are also grateful to the hon. Minister who is trying to race to keep up his performances with his intentions, and we hope that he will ultimately be able to keep his intentions and performances on the same level. Sir, we must today remember the hon. Member who is no more sitting here, Mr. Rama Rao, who could have made very valuable suggestions during the course of this debate.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is hearing you.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: He was one time the President of the Federation of Working Journalists.

Then, Sir, I come to the history of that Report. Mr, Mahanty called that journalist as an eminent journalist, who has written the history. I do not j know where his eminence comes in for the history of Indian journalism is wrought in the background of the freedom struggle. Our great journalists were born because of the freedom struggle, and every word that they penned was a mission to the masses. The eminent journalist who wrote the history for this report was at that time in the United States serving His Majesty's Government. This history has to be revised, and this history has to be revised by eminent people who have been through the struggle, and who have been Indian cent per cent then and now. Then we shall have a true and real history of journalism in India.

Sir, the time is already worrying me. But I stand here as a journalist; I have spent ten precious years of my life as a working journalist, as a small proprietor, kicked by the big, as a working journalist, hit by all kinds of obstacles in the way. Dodging bill collectors and dodging big papers, whom we have to pay small amounts like Rs. 200 or Rs. 300, bring attachments on us. I am not ashamed to say all that for we were fulfilling a mission. These are the press barons that exist. We were told Sir, that they had overdone against the press barons in the other House, but that can never be overdone, as I can see. We can still tell the true story of how we have suffered, how we

[Shrimati Violet Alva.] bought our paper in the black market, and how we went to the big printers. And we can also tell how good people helped us, and how that famous blc-ck-maker, Mr. Hussain of the Express Block Makers—today we owe him Rs. 10,000—never sent a notice to us, because ours was a mission. But the press barons sent attachment on Forum. Sir, mine is a Ftory truly of toil, tears and sweat, but I am now circumscribed within thirty minutes to tell you that story. I do not know where to begin. So, you shall have to pardon me, if I begin with the five recommendations that have been made with regard to the working journalists in the Press Commission's Report and which must be implemented.

Sir, we can never forget the working journalists. They are, in fact, the salt of the Fourth Estate. Without them, neither the millionaires nor their managing directors nor rotaries, nor their newsprint can give you the paper, nor can the legislators function without the working journalists. •[c]iir, I am putting the conclusion of my speech in the beginning, so that I do not. miss any points.

Then. Sir, I come to the news agencies, the P.T.I., the U.P.I, and the Hindustan Samachar. In this country, and in this continent, we still have to build up news agencies. And, therefore, the Government must come to the rescue of the news agencies, not to control them. The sorry tale of the U.P.I, that is going round today has not to go unheeded. Why should it be[l] so that it should be snatched away by a financier or by a money-lender. However, I shall come to it latei.

Then, Sir, I come to the State Trading Corpora^ im. Being a victim a[l]! round, I come to the State Trading Corporation. As a journalist, as a proprietor, you can neither get paper in free market, nor can you get a printer, unless you accept his quotations And here I had an agent in Delhi, who in the early years of the Forum, was told by the Times of India that that was a competitive paper and he should not sell it. I am telling you all this, because these are facts which no one can challenge. I have gone through the mill, and I stand here to tell you a story that I have gone through.

Sir, then after the State Trading Corporation we come to the Press Council. I do not know why Mr. Mahanty was worried about the rulemaking power of the Press Council. We shall come to the question— whether the Press Council should be a statutory body, whether it should be for the internal organisation of journalism itself, or whether it should be run as a statutory body or as a non-statutory body—later. But. the Press Commission has submitted certain-suggestions and certain recommendations, and I think we should accept them. The Press Council is there in. the United Kingdom as well.

Then, Sir, I come to the question of advertisements, and I have got a lot to say in the matter of advertisements, because the Government comes in for a lot of criticism on this ground. The-Press Commission has not given enough importance to this matter of advertisement. Without advertisement you cannot have circulation, and without circulation you cannot have advertisement. They are so interlinked. And I will tell you, Sir, how small papers have suffered. The Press Commission has said that they do not suffer. But I shall prove how they have suffered.

Then, Sir, I come to the question of price-page schedule. There is a hue and cry over this question of price-page schedule. The price-page schedule came in the year 1941, and when the Government, later on. was withdrawing it, it was the big papers that said that they wanted the price-pag« schedule, and today, they do not want it. Sir, it is not that the small papers are going to die. Let them die. As a matter of fact, we have all died after fulfilling a mission. Sir, the price—

page schedule is not going to hit the big papers. It will hit only those who believe in mass bribery. Today, the supplements of the different daily papers have become nearly an epidemic. The quota that should be 40 per cent, advertisements and 60 per cent, reading matter, has reversed. It is 60 per cent, this and 40 per cent, that, and what can the working journalists, who stand second to none in the world, do? They cannot give their proper work because so much is printed. If I were to serve in my humble way, I would rather put a red pencil across so many columns, and put all that in a matter of ten minutes' reading.

3 P.M.

Then having done with this, now I come to the working journalists. The Minister will perhaps here say that everything should be bargained in a collective manner. I want here to bring the fact to the notice of the hon. Minister that it was in June 1953 that the Indian Federation of Working Journalists requested the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society to enter into a collective agreement with the Federation. No reply has been received up to date. How do you expect the working journalists to go in for collective bargaining and collective interest? Sir, the working journalists are organizing themselves more and mere in the country which is indeed a happy situation to witness. Unless the working journalists are organised, they cannot bargain. For, today there is no wide field of employment and a working journalist can be thrown to the wolves. There are very many unhappy incidents which I shall not have time to mention but I have known of papers who, when paying the salaries, keep their right hand here on the figure and say 'Sign on the stamp for Ks. 120', while they have paid only Rs. 60. These things have happened and happen in the bigger papers. The smaller papers have been more honourable because they have gone along in the same channel with the working journalists but the bigger papers have not been honourable with their workers. There was

another incident in Bombay. I know of a leading daily of Bombay in which a news editor joined the workers' Union and he was thrown out with three months' salary. To this day, he has not got a job. These are the sorry tales.

Now I come to the free lance journalists. What is the scope of a free lance journalist? This Report says that there is dearth of writers. I don't know how they come t

o this conclusion. This land has been full of poets, philosophers, writers, politicians and statesmen and still the Press Commission observes that there is dearth of writers. I say we write; who will publish it? We publish but who will pay us? There is a leading daily in Delhi which said 'We shall give you Rs. 20 for your article.' Rs. 20 for a thousand word article—these are the conditions prevailing. Don't be misled by press barons. Though some of the hon. Members here may plead on their behalf, remember that these are the existing conditions. They have existed and are getting worse because the position of the editor has changed from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. While pleading for the working journalists, I want to talk of the big chains who spend more on newspapers and machines and less on services—on editorial charges. There are big papers who do not believe in straightaway employing a man. They will call him and say 'Give up that job' and when he gives up and comes, they say 'Now you work as an apprentice for six months and then you take Rs. 50.' What is this? This is because working journalists were not organized and also because scope of employment is narrow. We must have many more smaller papers so that these journalists cannot be held to ransom. Today all bigger papers can hold these ordinary journalists to ransom. I am telling you from experience and this position has to change.

Then I come to language newspapers. Unless we tilt the balance and we support the language newspapers

[Shrimati Violet Alva.] in the mofussil, we shall still be very lop-sided by chemes of circulation in the urban areasadvertisements and the general toning up of journalism.

Sir, I also want to know how many big papers in this country—in India— and chains run by big business magnates—from banking to jute and speculation they do everything and they also run chains of papers,—how many of them have thought it proper and fitting to send their best journalists from their offices to be trained up and gather experience around the world. I am not reluctant to say that the Statesman is the only paper that does it though there are other papers who can do it but will not do it. In India the Managing Director will be going gallivanting round the globe and the Managing Editor will sit in his air-conditioned room and the poor working journalist will starve like an under-dog and work all through the night and all through the day. That is why the suggestion made by the Press Commission on the minimum wages must be accepted and as far as punishment is concerned, first there must be a warning—I am reading only what is given there—second is censure, third is withholding increment, fourth is forced leave, fifth is suspension and finally termination of services. That alone can guarantee the due privileges that the working journalists should have.

I now come to the agencies—the P.T.I, and the U.P.I, and the Hindustan Samachar. Before I come to the P.T.I, and the U.P.I., let me mention the great stalwart Mr. Sada-nand who is no more, who died to build a news agency, not only national but also international but neither the Government helped him nor anyone else helped him. He struggled through his life with physical infirmity as well but he had a great ambition for the service of his nation. He did not succeed. Today we must remember him and we hope that others will follow suit and establish a news agency purely Asian, Indian, for Asia and for Asians. The P.T.I. I has had a very sorry record of very unhappy conditions since the time it was taken over by the Indians but then I am happy that such a satisfactory understanding has come between Shri Devadas Gandhi and Shri Donde, the representative of the working journalists. It was very recently that it happened. We do stand for a Corporation on a no-profit basis but a Corporation for news agencies does not come overnight with a magic wand. This condition will have to go on for some time and I hope this happy understanding will last long enough, until the Corporation comes, between the Managing Director and the working journalists, and I hope the P.T.I. offices will have a new look; for, one of their grievances was that type writers are too old; there are no proper chairs or benches. Everything is rotten, and that was not wrong. It was correct what they put down as their grievances. It will be found to be true if you go and see the P.T.I, offices in different places. It must have a new look with this happy understanding. They must celebrate this happy understanding by spending a little money and refurnishing their offices so that the workers feel that they are working in a proper atmosphere.

The U.P.I, was in a bad way and it has been taken over by a businessman. A businessman has taken charge of the news agency. What does he understand of a news agency? But money rules. Journalism is becoming more and more commercial, less and less ethical and moral. Today we must bow to the man whose pocket is full of money. I can restart my paper provided I guarantee my policy to the man who pays me the money, provided I am able to sing his tune. How can the working journalists carry on in this fashion? The present Chairman of the U.P.I.—this big business man—will have the fight to vet any proposal that may be considered by the Sub-Committee until all funds assisted by him were taken back by him or are repaid in full. I am rushing through my points. I now come

to the subject after my heart—advertising. I have watched the principle on which advertising is done in this country and I would like to know how many papers are independent in this country who can dare to criticise a big advertiser. I will read froia the report of the Royal Commission. Here is the Royal Commission on Pfess Report of the evidence of the Editor of the *Daily Express:*

> "The editor of the *Daily Express* denied that the paper refrained from attacking advertisers. He said: "We are constantly opposing monopolies, cartels, and combines in trade, and we have in the course ol my career, attacked Boots', the cash chemists, Woolworths', the chain stores and Lever Brothers".

Who dare attack Lever Brothers here? Is it that everybody is in favour of what the Lever Brothers as a cartel are doing and the other things that are going round? But here do we express our views as freely as we shout for the freedom of the press? No, because of the advertiser. The report further says:

> "We have ahc attacked the Co- I operative Society very vigorously" ! and the General Manager added "We have carried on very violent campaigns against the banks and against the Bank of England."

Tell me which Indian journalist or ! paper is prepared to do this? Who is prepared to remain independent as far as advertisement goes? They | have not yet built up those traditions. We bow to the advertiser and there are not enough small papers going round the country to dare to do so. Sir, to quote again from the Royal Commission:

> "Instead of the newspapers competing to sell their space to adver- i tisers, advertisers had for a number of years to wait their turn for the limited space available. Nationwide advertising pushed out of the London papers was glad to find space in the provinces."

And this, let it be noted, was during the war years. Why are you crying I against the price-page schedule? I tell you that what will be pushed out of the urban press will definitely go into the channels of the mofussil press. Today we want more and more papers in the mofussil areas than in the urban areas.

Then, Sir, I come to the Government advertisement. Government in this matter has a lot to examine and rectify. Especially when a Five Year Plan is on, when we are trying to put all our resources on heavy industries, when we want'a lot of publicity, where does all that money go? It all goes to the foreign agencies. Foreign advertising agencies claim Government funds to a large extent. I shall quote here the figure. According to the Press Commission's Report, five foreign advertising agencies which are not registered in India control twice as much business as the combined business of all the Indian advertising agencies. And you will note that the latest available *&rA* authoritative figures are that during 1954, five foreign advertising agencies placed business of nearly Rs. 1*55 crores with certain newspapers, whereas during the same period 51 Indian advertising agencies placed a total business of only Rs. 96 lakhs with the same papers. Why is this so? We are today fighting against all foreign interests, and here you encourage foreign advertising agencies. The annual turnover of the biggest foreign advertising agency is Rs. 1 crore and 20 lakhs while the annual turnover of biggest Indian advertising agency is only Rs. 20 lakhs. Here are revealing figures for the Government to take note of. And more than that, I would request the hon. Minister to make note of this, that the Air India International has an annual advertisement budget of Rs. 7 lakhs. Who gets its advertisement quota? The Indian Air Lines Corporation has an annual advertisement budget of Rs. 5 lakhs. The State Bank has an annual advertisement budget of Rs. 1 lakh. Why are Government not patronising Indian agencies?

[Shrimati Violet Alva.]

You may say that they are not efficient. But will you give them a chance? Are you going to keep these foreign advertising agencies in this country for ever? If the Government does not come out and set a good example, how can we expect out businessmen to do otherwise? They take crores of rupees from the Industrial Finance Corporation and then the publicity quota is given to foreign agencies. Unless Government sets the model, how are we going to put right these things? That is why I say that the Government should make it its policy and in the next Plan, when advertisement will increase, when Government's advertisements will go up very much, they should lay it down here and now, this popular Indian Government, this Welfare State, should say that they shall patronise Indian advertising agencies only. Sir, I shall point .to one more matter to show how Indian business goes to foreign advertising agencies. Many of our Indian business firms enjoy Government protection by way of tariffs. They receive substantial help also from the Industrial Finance Corporation. Yet when it comes to publicity, they go to the foreign advertising agencies.

Sir, here I would like to read out a small quotation from "The Swade-' shi" dated the 6th April 1955, where speaking of Shri A. D. Shroff who was Chairman of the Indian Society of Advertisers, it says:

> "We hope Shri Shroff would move in the matter and build up a Code of Rules in advertising which would encourage deserving national media to reach the large masses of the people and thus serve the interests of national producers. We also hope that he would examine the causes of 'Forum's ceasing publication after its editor's trenchant attack in Parliament on foreign interests established in India's trade, industry and services."

Sir, this should serve as advice to the Government also.

Now I come to the Press Council. Sir, I am keeping within my limits. The Press Council, like the price-page schedule, has come in for a lot of criticism. But the Press Council must come. If I were to express my own views, I feel it should never be a sta tutory body, for it is no good having any organ of the press controlled by the Government. We want the free dom of the Press, complete from the top to the bottom, whether it be the Press Council or whether it be any other body that you have. I would not mind accepting the suggestion of Mr. Mahanty who said that the Chair man of the Press Council need- not be a High Court Judge. I think I am in agreement with that view, for we have very many veteran journalists in this country, men who have sacri ficed everything to remain good, steady and honest, and kept their missionary zeal .....

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Has the Press Commission stated that the Chairman of the Council should be a High Court Judgei? I am doubtful.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: No, per-haps I am mixing up, tnat is in the United Kingdom. But I think the Press Commission suggested that it should be a High Court Judge. In the United Kingdom the Lord Chief Justice appoints the Chairman and in India, according to the Report, the Chief Justice will appoint a High Court Judge as Chairman. Sir, the Press Council has got to come, but it must neither supersede nor succeed the existing organisations that are there for journalists and proprietors. It should never succeed, supersede or crush the existing organisations; but it should be built up as a non-statutory body, for it is meant also to guarantee the highest standard in journalism, more amenities to working journalists and it has also to build up a standard so that the big proprietors may not play ducks and drakes with their employees. Therefore, it should be a body for the regulation of its own affairs and it should build up a code of ethics. Mr. Mahanty was very much worried

about the "yellow Press." I do not know why he should have spent so much time on this "yellow Press."

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: He is all yellow.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I am not, you are.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: For, the "yellow Press" is no danger. But everything looks yellow to the jaundiced eye as everything looks 'suspect' to the infected spy. However, I submit, the way in which we in this country can best reconcile our democratic instinct with the necessary discipline of a profession is to allow the profession to govern itself. Here I may refer to what the Royal Commission on the Press in the U.K. had to say:

> "It was suggested to us that one of the consequences of the industrial development of the Press, and one of the causes of its shortcomings, had been a decline in the status of the editor *vis-a-vis* the proprietor."

And then it goes on to say:

> "The editor of the twentieth century popular newspaper was performing a different function from the editor of the nineteenth century newspaper or the modern quality paper."

Sir, this is a very correct assessment of what is happening in our own country too.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is time, Madam.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: I want to say something more on the Press Council, but I shall refrain now and make a few observations on the question of the price-page schedule and then conclude.

Now, Sir, I come to the price-page schedule. This price-page schedule is very necessary. Government is not able to make up its mind on this subject.' Let us hope that the vested interests in journalism are not strong, that Government will fight against it and that they will look into this matter with a dispassionate mind. Journalism must grow, language papers must grow and that is why we want price-page schedule. You find lots of supplements coming out these days. There is a supplement of twenty pages on jute today, on copper tomorrow and so on. That way, every daily newspaper is indulging in the issue of supplements. They have half a dozen supplements in a month; near epidemics. I do not know who reads them. I am told that by selling them as waste one can make much more money. If there is so much of newsprint, then:'cut down the quota. The main point is that the small papers are not against the price-page schedule. The very same big papers wanted the price-page schedule when this was being withdrawn and today they object to its introduction.

I am unable to cover all my points for the simple reason that there is no time but I will come to the newsprint corporation. In England they have such a corporation. In India it is very necessary. I know about O.G.L., everything about newsprint, printing paper, glaze paper, art paper and all kinds of paper. I had been at the mercy of the black-marketeers for seven long years till I closed my publication. I know what they are. The newsprint comes in reels; these reels are cut and the paper is thrown away as waste. Later on, that thrown-away paper is wound round and sold to the small papers and sold at a profit. Waste paper, paper that is to be thrown away, is sold to us, small papers, and those people make a lot of money. This, then is the position which even today baffles us. Is the Government going to let them go? No, it is time that we set right our house lest other methods should come and try to set right things for us.

There are many more points but I shall deal with only one. I shall deal

[Shrimati Violet Alva.] with the A.B.C. I do not know if anyone knows what A.B.C. means. It is Audit Bureau of Circulation. I think the Minister here said that he consults the A.B.C. It is a racket composed of big advertisers, big barons and everything big about it.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: We do not consult.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA: I thought you did. I was not a member of the A..B.C.

Now, I come to the selling agencies. The J.-Tess Commission has not paid enough attention to the selling agents in the country. There is no co-ordinated system of selling; you will find one paper on the road stall hidden underneath another; all sorts of corrupt and evil practices are followed. If you become my selling agent, the other man will come and offer 30% more to the agent and take him away. This sort of thing is going on and the Press Commission has not given proper attention to it.

Now, lastly, I come to the black list. I shall just read this portion and then sit down. "Mr. Winston Churchill, who until 1922 represented Dundee in Parliament, put himself in this category, and for many years Mr. Churchill's name seldom if ever appeared in the 'Courier and Advertiser'. It is questionable whether the omission did Mr. Churchill any harm, but it doubtless afforded Mr. Thompson personal satisfaction.*** *** After the election of 1945, Mr. Churchill's name gradually reappeared in the Thompson columns. Evidently he had been sufficiently punished, or possibly the expression 'Leader of the Opposition' was considered too unwieldy." There are black lists and white lists. There are Press barons who will completely black you out; there are all sorts of forces working. There are certain things which will never be published.

I have many more points but I ihall not deal with all of them. I stand for implementing the recommendations. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY (Orissa): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I think the country should express its gratitude to the Members of the Press Commission who have given us such an excellent and comprehensive Report. My only regret is that, although the Report is so comprehensive and it has been before us for a pretty long time, Government have yet been able to decide even on the main recommendations of the Commission. I do not say that this Report is the last word on this matter but I feel that if this Report is implemented in its entirety, we will have laid the foundations of a free and democratic Press in this country. With this attitude alone, we have to consider this Report. Whenever this question cropped up—as you know, several times it has been raised in this House—we have had the stock reply from the Ministry, "We are consulting the States as they are interested; we are also consulting several other interests".

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Come to the Report direct. It is being discussed now; why should you go over past history?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: I must have my say.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You go on in your own way but come to the Report.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: I am giving the background. This, I think, is essential. When this question was raised in this House in the last Session, the Minister said that it would not be fair to the Members of Parliament to discuss this Report then as Government had not yet decided on the many issues raised in the Report. But now he says that it will not be possible for them to arrive at a decision without knowing the minds of the Members of Parliament. He is shifting his ground so often; I do not know what is the real reason behind it. What is it that is preventing Government from coming to a decision on these matters? That is the straight question that I would like to ask of

the Minister. Since he has made that announcement, is he prepared to accept at least the unanimous recommendations of the Members of Parliament and make such a declaration of his intention here and now? I have gone through the debate in the other House. Out of 27, barring one or two, almost all have supported the recommendations and have demanded that they should be implemented. Is he prepared to make such an announcement? There would have been some sense in postponing consideration of this Report only if he was prepared to make such an announcement.

Even if he says that he accepts them generally, I would have no objection but then he himself admitted earlier that general acceptance had no meaning. The main recommendations, as mentioned by the Minister himself, are the ones relating to the price-page schedule, working journalists, Press Council, statutory provision, etc. Even in the other House, while explaining the main recommendations, he dealt with these things but if you go through the debate, you will And that there is not even one concrete suggestion that he has accepted. It is really a great tragedy. The vested interests in the Press, people who, from the. very beginning, have been opposing even the appointment of the Press Commission, have come forward today to say that

this is an interference with the freedom of the Press; and I am sorry that our Minister has echoed their voice. What is the freedom of the Press? The freedom of the Press did not worry you when you passed the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act; it did not worry you when by amending criminal Procedure Code you banned any discussion in the papers about the misdeeds of Government servants and public servants. Even the big papers did not raise a single voice. Of course, they have obtained a good certificate from the Minister as the Minister himself got a good certificate from them. They are very much concerned about this and that is what everyone of us should be very careful about. What is that point? They say, "If you introduce the price-page schedule, if you appoint the Press Registrar, these things are against the freedom of the Press; you are interfering with our rights".

This is a new slogan which they have raised, and to our great regret the Minister has almost fallen a victim to that slogan.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN (Madras): Not 'almost'.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: I do not know. I am yet to know from him whether he is with them or he is with the general public sentiments expressed in this House which he represents.

Now that slogan about the interference with the freedom of the press has two aspects, political and economic and I am not going to deal with the political aspect of the problem. The question is that it is not only political but also economic and it has been established not only in this country but also all over the world, so to say, that freedom is impaired not because of any laws here and there but because of the monopoly and concentration that exist in the press industry. I do not want to read extracts in support of this because only very little time is at my disposal but I want to point out to the Minister this much that the U.N.E.S. CO. in their report have brought out very clearly that although it has a political aspect, it is the economic aspect namely, monopoly and concentration, which is the main determining factor in abrogating the freedom of the press.

Sir, what is the position in our country to-day? Is there no monopoly? The Press Commission itself has dealt with this matter. Of course they have not said 'monopoly'; they have used very mild language; they have used the word 'concentration' and the words 'monopolistic tendency' which mean the same thing. I want to know whether these press barons, these big newspaper proprietors do not really

[Shri S. N. Dwivedy.] control the entire press industry today. Is it not 'concentration' I ask the Minister. It is in the Press Commission's Report; you can see that there and it is this. Five owners control 29 papers and 31-2 per cent, of the circulation while fifteen owners control 54 papers and 50-1 per ce

nt, of the circulation. Is it not concentration, I want to ask him. If you see everywhere whose voice is dominant in the country today it is that of the few big owners of the press; they are the real mouthpieces of the public opinion in this country, so to say, and by that voice our Minister is guided. They are in the All India Newspaper Editors Conference; you go and you will And mostly they are there. In the Eastern Newspaper Society they are there, and in the P.T.I, also of which they are really the masters. So wherever you go, whichever resolutions you read about the reactions in the press the voice is the same but in a different form and in different organisations; the persons are the same but in a different garb they come to you and the interest is the same but it is only in a public fashion they express it. Therefore 'concentration' is there. Now the question is whether Dr. Keskar is prepared to break this concentration. Is he prepared to stop these unhappy tendencies in the press of our country? I know Dr. Keskar himself is very zealous to keep the freedom of the Press of our country, but I would only appeal to him to extricate himself from these corrupting influences around him and perhaps in his Ministry itself and save the society by accepting its recommendations, Sir.

We know that in all other countries, in England, in Italy, in America-America is taken as a model for freedom of press—nobody can say it is an iron curtain country—in France— France has given the idea of birth of freedom, in all those countries, laws exist as regards newspaper control, consumption, price-page schedule, etc. and for these things there are legislations and nobody has raised this bogey of interference with the freedom of the press' and objected to the price-page schedule for which so much clamour is there. Friends have already referred to it that it was the big papers then who wanted it. Now they are the persons who are opposing it. It is not a fact, Sir, that because w

e impose some restrictions they will give more reading matter. Even a U.N.E.S.C.O. publication has recently said, after a careful study, all over the world, the more the papers, the less the reading matter. About three days ago I came across the Hindustan Times, a daily paper published in Delhi; it gives twelve pages, but you will be surprised to know that out of the 12 pages, out of the 96 columns, 50J columns were advertisements. So it is not a fact that the people would get more reading matter, more material to read. Really they want to manoeuvre and manipulate it in such a way that the small papers in this country would never thrive and they will merrily go on with their trade. I was really very sorry to read what the Minister said in the other House. He said after all the Press Commission's' recommendation is a mere recommendation, but, I ask, how have you treated even the Bank Award—it is very recent history —and how on flimsy grounds you modified that award. And now Justice Gajendragadkar's report is before you and I ask in all humility: Can you get more expert or impartial or fair-minded persons than those who were members of this Press Commission? Do you think there are other experts who will go through it and give their judgment about it? It is not fair that the Minister should treat this as a mere recom-j mendation, a report which has dealt with all aspects of the question and has not left even a single aspect wherein one can say that this question has not been considered.

KAZI KARIMUDDIN: Is it a judgment?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: Not a judgment, but what are they saying? Even the States Reorganization Commission's report has not yet been published,

but the Ministers, the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and everybody is going round the country and saying: Accept their recommendations. It may be a judgment, it may not be a judgment, but the fact is there.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: The hon. Member, I think, does understand that there are commissions and co

mmissions. Government does appoint com- j missions which are practically tribunals and they are commissions which are asked to make general reports covering all sorts of questions and it J happened that he himself referred to j the Bank Award. So he should not j confuse the issues.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: The Minister himself is confusing it, I say, because ha nimself once says it is an impartial and good report and again that it Is a mere recommendation. I want to know whether this recommendation, j of the Press Commission is going to be scrutinised by persons who are, I think, very less qualified than the persons who sat on the Press Commission. That was my point. It should not be treated as a mere recommendation like that of any other commission that we had before.

Having said this much, Sir, on the general aspect of that question I would just refer to the working journalists. I am glad that Dr. Keskar said in the other House that this would receive his first priority. It is good so far as it goes. But at the same time he has not told us anything concrete. It is known to everybody and it has been expressed by other Members also that this is a very great question troubling us for many many years, and without it I do not think the press could be put on a sound footing, I mean, without considering the demands of the working journalists sympathetically.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: The hon. Member has been referring so imany times to what I said in the other House. I do not know whether he remembers what I said. I said that the legislation regarding service conditions o*

working journalists is practically ready and will be introduced very soon.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: I only said that the conditions of working journalists would receive the first priority at his hands. Sir, I am of the view that the Press Commission's recommendations should be accepted in their entirety and I do not think and I am not afraid that it will affect the small papers if it is so done. It is known what is the lot of the journalist in this country today. There is a saying—I do not know whether it is prevalent in other parts—that if a man is unemployed he becomes either a politician or a homoeopath or a journalist.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: Or a lawyer.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: That is the real lot of the journalist, and I'am quite certain that with opportunities in other spheres they would leave this job and go away. What we have to do is, we have to see that we keep this profession in its proper position and I would draw Dr. Keskar's atte

ntion to it because there is a suggestion already and nobody knows what would come out of it. There is a suggestion, in spite of the fact that the Press Commission has recommended a statutory minimum wage, to have regional wage boards in different parts. This matter was referred to in the other House. The Minister is silent over it. Is he going to refer this matter to persons in the States who would give their judgment in these issues, sit in judgment on the recommendations of the Press Commission? The Chairman of the Commission was himself quite conversant with the labour laws in other industries and he has made the recommendation. Now the hon. Minister has raised the question of its effect on other sectors. He says that had also to be taken into consideration.

I think all these matters were considered very thoroughly by the Press

[Shri S. N. Dwivedy.] Commission and they came to the conclusion that there should be a statutory minimum wage. Collective bargaining is always open to any trade union organisati

on. They do not want any advice from anybody on that account but the question is whether statutorily they are going to provide something which will have a binding influence on the industry itself. That is the point at issue. Therefore the fixation of a minimum wage is not going to really affect very much this industry if the Government is determined to implement it. I will just tell you how it affects the industry. And this is from the statements of the Press proprietors themselves which were scrutinised by the Press Commission. According to the figures of the proprietors, out of a total revenue of more than Rs. 10 crores. the working journalists are getting only Rs. 80 lakhs, that is to say, only 12-9 per cent of the total revenue. Why grudge a little more, that is my question, which should add to the barest living facilities available to the employees in this industry? The other employees in this industry are protected by labour legislation. I would also like the hon. Minister to give us a guarantee or tell us whether he is prepared to include a provision in the measure that is contemplated that the working journalists would be able to get arrears of pay because the Payment of Wages Act is not extended to them. Sir, no less a person than our friend Mr. Rama Rao, who is not a member of the House at present, while appearing before the Select Committee on the Companies Bill, said that out of his 30 years of service in the Press he was yet to get 90 months arrears of pay. That is the position today. If you go into it you will find that thousands of journalists have been deprived of even their minimum pay after working for many many years, just on flimsy grounds. Sir, I would not go into the details of these because you know how the Press proprietors, the bigger ones, manipulate the accounts to show that they have no money and that they are not making any profit. I may tell you that a paper of Madras possesses 28 c&*s. Why cars? Because cars would fettM more depreciation value. The Gemral Manager of a paper published both in Delhi and Bombay gets Rs. 15,000 a month with 15 years' guarantee whereas a man on the editorial staff can be dismissed at the sweet will of the proprietor because there is a clause in the appointment that if they think that his activities are prejudicial they can forthwith dismiss him. The managing editor of a Delhi paper draws out for himself Rs. 3,000.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: More than that.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: Besides, he has a free house, a free car and 10 pet cent profit from the concern. And what is he doing for the working journalists? He is at present the President of the Bihar Journals Ltd. A person from New Delhi is the President of the Bihar Journals Ltd. in Patna, because it is a Birla concern. And what is the lot of the employees there? Those people have not got their pay for the last three months. That is how they protect the interests of the working journalists. They say that if you introduce this price-page schedule the small p

apers would be affected and they would not be able to pay. As if these people are paying properly!

Sir, I would just refer to another point and that is about the space in the newspapers. The Press Commission has recommended 40 per cent for advertisement. Here I am really glad that the previous policy of giving government advertisements has been ;hanged by the Minister and he is not lepending only on the A.B.C. It is not nerely a question of fixation of idvertisement space but I want to mow what has been the decision of he Government on the telescopic rates ecommended by the Commission ipon which the Minister had said that ie would come to a dec

ision shortly, lir, the Press Commission has also horoughly examined the reading mate-ial in the Indian Press. Sir, it is a

tact today that the Opposition viewpoint does not find a proper place in the Press. I will give the example of two papers in Orissa. I have got the figures with me f«r two months—June and July. Out of 2016 columns the Government gets 608 columns and the Opposition only 57 columns. That is in the *Samaj.* In the other, *Praja-tantra,* out of 1,760 columns, the Government gets 487 columns and the Opposition 49 columns only. Can anybody feel that in this country democracy will really thrive if the Press behaves in this manner? So it is also a question for consideration by the Minister and he should see that real democratic behaviour is followed by the Press in this country as a whole.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Does the hon. Member want all these things to be fixed by law that they must give so much space to the Government, so much to the Opposition?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: There are so many methods in which it can be done; I need not narrate them here, I think the Press will take a note of it and it is better if the Government also makes up its mind about it.

Sir, much has been said about Ihe P.T.I, today. I do not know whether it is a free agent or not. In the P.T.I. you are not sure whether what you write will get publicity. They apply their scissors if at any point you criticise the Government o[r] anybody who is a spokesman of the Government. I will give you two examples. Recently ten Members of this Parliament issued a statement and in that statement there was one sentence in which we had said that on a particular issue the Prime Minister was not able to confuse the public as he has been doing so often. Sir, that portion was cut out because it was against the Prime Minister. Then there was another statement issued by Jaya Praknsh Narain in Patna. He has stated therein, 'I am issuing this statement because misleading statements have been made by the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister of India' ai that portion was cut out. So if the: is a slight indication, even inoffensiv of saying something against the Gov ernment that does not get publicity

(Interruption by Shri M. Govinda Reddy)

I was yielding to the Minister. Yor. are not the Minister and so I am not yielding.

Sir, I fully support the recommendation of the Commission and I want that the news agencies should be made a public Corporation. The hon. Minister simply says, "we have referred it to the Board of Directors." Who are these Board of Directors? They have been opposing this Press Commission itself and they say that this is a retrograde recommendation and you expect the same Board of Directors to convene a meeting of the shareholders and decide to convert it into a Corporation. That is impossible; that would never happen. It is the duty of the Government to implement the recommendation. They have the list of the shareholders, I believe. Why cannot the Minister convene a meeting of the shareholders and place before them this proposal. It is not that only the shareholders are responsible. The Press Commission has very clearly stated that either the Government should come forward with a legislation or the President should make some declaration.

It is very clearly stated in this Press Commission Report. So, it is not as if the Government has no responsibility in this matter.

There is another aspect of the question. You have to consider these news agencies, either U.P.I, or P.T.I., as really public carriers of this country like the Railways, Posts and Telegraphs. The district papers all over the country get the news of the world only through them. So, it is our responsibility, a greater responsibility on us and the Government to see that these public carriers really discharge a public duty, not remain at the sweet will of certain newspaper proprietors

[Shri S. N. Dwivedy.] ho are controlling it. And as has een stated, the other agency, the J.P.I., has gone over to a capitalist, 'hat is a very regrettable aspect of he question, because the Government las always treated this agency with discrimination. They have never advanced loans as they have demanded from time to time. Now, that is a question of the past. But, I think, the Government should immediately take up this question and give them a time-limit. If the Board of Directors do not decide this question, he has said: I am not giving them further aid as recommended by the Commission." That is very good so far as it goes. But he should not stop there. He should take further steps and say that, if within such and such a date these news agencies are not made public corporations, the Government will have nothing to do with them. If that step is taken, I do not think the news agencies are going to treat it silently and sit silently without taking any definite decision.

Sir, with these remarks I conclude. And I hope that to the points which I have specifically raised, the Minister will let us know the views of the Government—on those specific matters, not on general question.

श्री बनारसीदास चतुर्वेदी (विन्ध्य प्रदेश) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं दस बारह मिनट से ज्यादा आप लोगों का समय नहीं लेना चाहता। इंडियन फेडरेशन आफ वर्किंग जर्नीलिस्ट्स के प्रधान की हैसियत से मुझे दो तीन बातें कहनी हैं। पहली बात तो यह है कि हम लोग मिनिस्टर साहब की शिथिलता से, जल्दी काम न करने से, असंतुष्ट हो गये हैं। निजी तौर पर मैं उनका अत्यन्त कृतज्ञ हूं। मेरे ऊपर वे बराबर कृपा करते रहे हैं। लेकिन जनसाधारण में, पत्रकारों में, उनके बारे में और सरकार के बारे में जो भावना है उसे उन तक पहुंचाना मैं अपना कर्तव्य मानता हूं। मद्रास में, जहां मुझे जाने का मौका मिला, करीब करीब सभी पत्रकारों ने इस बात का शिकायत की कि हमारे मिनिस्टर साहब ने बहुत देर लगाई हैं और जल्दी काम नहीं किया हैं। उन्हें शायद इस बात का पता होगा कि इस बीच में कितने ही पूंजीपति, पत्र मालिकों ने हमारे वर्किंग जर्नीलिस्ट्स पर बड़े बड़े अन्याय किये हैं, अत्याचार किये हैं।

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI CHANDRAVATI LAKHANPAL) in the Chair.]

उनकी कहानी डा० केसकर साहब के पास तक कई बार पहुंच चुकी हैं। कितने ही आदमी यहां पर आये हैं, कई आदमी मुझे नैनीताल में भी मिले और उन्होंने इस बात की शिकायत की कि बावजूद कितने ही प्रार्थना पत्रों के उनकी प्रार्थना पर कोई ध्यान नहीं दिया गया। हमारे मिनिस्टर साहब को पता हैं कि टाइम्स आफ इंडिया में और उसके साथी पत्रों में, कलकत्ता में, सौ आदमी निकाल दिये गये थे और उनके मामले अभी तक जहां के तहां पड़े हुये हैं। एक हिन्दी दैनिक के सम्पादक ने तरह तरह के उपायों से, मैं यह जान बूझ कर कहता हूं, रुपया इकट्ठा किया हैं और उस रुपये का जो उन्होंने दुरुपयोग किया हैं, पत्रकारों के साथ जो दुर्व्यवहार किया हैं, आध पत्रकार निकाल दिये गये हैं, शायद हमारे मंत्री महोदय को उसका पता होगा। उन के पत्र में कितने ही आदमी नौकर थे, कई साल तक उनका मुकदमा चलता रहा, सुप्रीम कोर्ट तक वह गया, किन्तु उनमें से किसी को भी एक पैसा भी अभी तक नहीं मिला।

बम्बई के एक दैनिक के मामले में भी इसी तरह की दुर्घटना घटी। उसके एक कर्मचारी पत्रकार संघ के सदस्य बनना चाहते थे किन्तु उनको नोटिस दे दिया गया। इस तरह के सीरियस मामले इस बीच में होते रहे हैं जिन की खबर हमारे मंत्री महोदय को होनी चाहिये। उन्होंने अब हमें यह विश्वास दिलाया हैं कि जल्दी से जल्दी वे किसी निर्णय पर पहुंचेंगे और अपने विचार हम लोगों के सामने रखेंगे। वर्तमान समय में ऐसा प्रतीत होता हैं कि

हम लोग किसी मैदान में व्याख्यान दे रहे हैं। हमें इस बात का पता नहीं कि आखिर गवर्नमेंट क्या सोचती हैं, क्या करना चाहती हैं। उन्होंने दो बार जरूर हमारे आदमियों को बुलाया था। एक बार उन्होंने पूछा था यद्यपि प्राइस पेज शेड्यूल के बारे में और प्रेस लॉ के बारे में कोई राय नहीं मांगी गई थी और नवम्बर सन् १९५४ में हमारे संघ ने अपनी राय उनके पास भेज दी थी। अप्रैल में भी हमारे कई आदमी बुलाये गये थे और उसके मौके पर उनका जो इम्प्रेशन हुआ हमारे सेक्रेटरी ने अभी हमें बतलाया। उन्होंने यह इम्प्रेशन दिया कि जो रिकमेंडेशन्स प्रेस कमीशन की ओर से की गई हैं वे कुछ अव्यावहारिक हैं। क्या उससे कम पर वे लोग राजी हो सकते हैं ?

डा० बी० वी० केसकर : अगर यह इम्प्रेशन हैं तो गलत हैं।

श्री बनारसीदास चतुर्वेदी : जैसा मुझ से अभी हमारे जनरल सेक्रेटरी ने कहा था वह मैंने आप तक पहुंचा दिया। मुझे खुशी हैं अगर यह इम्प्रेशन गलत हैं। तो अभी तक हम लोगों को पता नहीं लगा कि सरकार क्या करना चाहती हैं, क्या नहीं करना चाहती हैं। तरह तरह की अफवाहें उड़ी हुई हैं। कोई कहता हैं कि मिनिमम वेज का सवाल रीजनल बोर्ड पर छोड़ दिया जायगा। अगर इस तरह की बात की गई तो यह घोर अन्याय होगा। ट्रावनकोर में या मद्रास में अगर आदमी कम खर्च में रहता हैं और अगर आप इस वजह से उनको कम वेतन देंगे तो यह बड़ी भारी गलती होगी। ये जो आई० ए० एस० के आदमी हैं या रेलवे के आदमी हैं, उनको क्या रीजनल बोर्डों के मुताबिक तनख्वाह दी जाती हैं ? फिर हम लोगों पर क्यों इस तरह का अत्याचार किया जाता हैं ?

दूसरा सवाल प्राइस पेज शेड्यूल के बारे में हैं। यह अफवाह उड़ी हुई हैं कि अनेक पूंजीपतियों ने हमारे मंत्रिमंडल पर अथवा अन्य लोगों पर अपना दबाव डाला हैं और वे इसे नामंजूर कर देंगे। खैर हमें पता नहीं हैं कि क्या होने वाला हैं। लेकिन एक बात मैं मंत्री महोदय से कह देना चाहता हूं कि पत्रकार संघ १७ सौ १८ सौ आदमियों का संघ हैं, हिन्दुस्तान में जब कि कुल तीन हजार पत्रकार हैं। उनको इस तरह से असंतुष्ट करने से गवर्नमेंट का कोई लाभ होगा, इसकी उन्हें आशा छोड़ देनी चाहिये। यद्यपि हमें धैर्य हैं और अनन्त काल तक धैर्य के साथ हम अत्याचार सहते भी रहे हैं, लेकिन गवर्नमेंट को जानना चाहिये कि उन्हें फाइव ईयर प्लान में तथा अन्य प्रश्नों में हमारा भी सहयोग लेना हैं। हम लोग उन आदमियों में से नहीं हैं, जो किसी प्रकार की धमकी दें। मैंने सुना हैं कि पूंजीपति पत्र मालिकों ने धमकी दी हैं कि अगर आप यह चीजें करेंगे तो हम एलेक्शन्स में आपकी मदद नहीं करेंगे। मैं नहीं जानता कि इसमें कितना सत्य हैं। पर इस प्रकार की धमकियों में हमारा कोई विश्वास नहीं हैं, लेकिन १७, १८ सौ आदमियों के समूह को, तीन हजार में से जो बाकी आदमी हैं उनमें से अधिकांश हमारे साथ हैं, उनको असंतुष्ट कर देना ऐसे आदमियों को असंतुष्ट कर देना जो तमाम भारतवर्ष को एक प्रकार से मानसिक भोजन दे रहे हैं, गवर्नमेंट की बड़ी भारी गलती होगी। मुझे विश्वास हैं कि हमारे मंत्री महोदय कैबिनेट तक हम लोगों की श्रमजीवी पत्रकार संघ की, यह बात पहुंचा देंगे।

श्रीमती सावित्री देवी निगम (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपाध्यक्षा महोदया, प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट पढ़ते समय हमें यह बड़ी अच्छी तरह विदित हो जाता हैं कि जिन लोगों ने यह रिपोर्ट तैयार की हैं वे अनुभवी विद्वान ही नहीं बल्कि अत्यंत कर्मठ और परिश्रमी लोग हैं और जन हित की कसौटी पर कसने के बाद ही उन्होंने रिपोर्ट की सिफारिशों को किया हैं।

[श्रीमती सावित्री देवी निगम]

प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशें समाचार-पत्र उद्योग का कायाकल्प कर सकेंगी, इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं है। प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट एक स्थायी महत्व का ग्रंथ है, इसे भी मानने से कोई इंकार नहीं कर सकता क्योंकि इसमें जनहित और समाजहित को ही मुख्यता दी गई है। इसलिये प्रेस कमीशन के सभी सदस्य हमारे और सभी देशवासियों के बड़े बधाई के पात्र हैं। किन्तु, सच्चे वाकयात के एक फैसले को पढ़ते ही हमारी समझ में यह बात आ जाती है कि अन्य सभी उद्योगों के समान ही समाचारपत्र का उद्योग भी पूंजीपतियों के एकाधिपत्य में आ चुका है। महोदया, ये १५ उद्योगपति केवल अखबारों को ही नहीं बल्कि देश के अन्य तमाम उद्योगों को भी अपने चंगुल में फांसे हुये हैं। जहां तक अन्य उद्योगों का सवाल है, उनमें धीरे धीरे विकेन्द्रीयकरण और राष्ट्रीयकरण की जो पालिसी है वह आगे बढ़ रही है, किन्तु समाचारपत्र जैसे उपयोगी उद्योग का इस प्रकार पूंजीपतियों के चंगुल में फंसा रहना समूचे राष्ट्र के लिये एक बड़ी घातक बात है और जिन विरोधी परिस्थितियों से सारे जर्नलिस्ट्स इन दिनों गुजर रहे हैं, जिस प्रकार का प्रचार आजकल हो रहा है, उसे देखते हुये ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट के बाद भी इस उद्योग का कायाकल्प करना बहुत ही मुश्किल हो जायगा, यदि देश के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में भी साथ ही साथ क्रान्ति नहीं लाई गई। क्योंकि प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट पढ़ते ही हमें यह भली भांति पता चल जाता है कि किस प्रकार के अव्यावहारिक और अनीतिपूर्ण कार्य जो प्रेस बैरंस हैं वे करते हैं, किस प्रकार के हथकंडे किये जाते हैं और बेचारे सरस्वती के वरदपुत्रों की गरदनें, जिनको पूरी सहायता मिलनी चाहिये, हमेशा पूंजीपतियों के चंगुल में रहती हैं। इस रिपोर्ट को पढ़ने के बाद हमारी श्रद्धा पत्रकारों के लिये और भी कई गुना बढ़ जाती है, क्योंकि ऐसी विरोधी परिस्थितियों में भी उन्होंने पत्रकारिता का स्तर इतना ऊंचा रखने में जो सफलता पाई है, वह प्रसंशनीय और अनुकरणीय है।

महोदया, कुछ पत्रों के दूवारा अथवा अच्छे पत्रों के मालिकों के दूवारा मिलने वाली थोड़ी बहुत सहूलियतों से हमने देखा कि हमारे कुछ बहुत ही अनुभवी और विचारशील लोग भी बहके जा रहे हैं; परन्तु मैं यह कहना चाहूंगी कि यह तो एक प्रकार की रिश्वत सी होगी, यदि हम लोग इन थोड़े से पत्रों से मिलने वाली सहूलियतों और सुविधाओं को देख कर बहक जांय, क्योंकि अभी थोड़े दिनों से जो **सहूलियतें दी जाने** लगी हैं, उनका एक कारण यह भी है कि जितनी भी खराबियां, लालेसनेस और पे स्केल के बारे में त्रुटियां हैं उनको ढकने के लिये ही, मूंदने के लिये ही, प्रेस बैरंस की ओर से यह सब किया जा रहा है।

महोदया, यदि हम प्रेस कमीशन रिपोर्ट की सारी सिफारिशों को तीन भागों में बांटें तो बहुत ही अच्छा होगा और हमारा काम भी आसान हो जायगा। पहले प्रकार की सिफारिशें वे हैं जो कि इस उद्योग के विकास के लिये की गई हैं। दूसरे प्रकार की सिफारिशें वे हैं जो कि सरकार, पूंजीपतियों और समाचारपत्रों से सम्बन्धित उद्योगों के विकेन्द्रीयकरण के विषय में हैं। तीसरे प्रकार की सिफारिशें वे हैं जो कि पत्रकारों की आर्थिक स्थिति और उनके हितों की रक्षा के सम्बन्ध में हैं। अच्छा होता कि इन सिफारिशों को कैटेगराइज कर दिया जाता और फिर प्राथमिकता दे दी जाती। किन्तु, १२० सिफारिशों का एक ऐसा बंडल सा बन गया है कि उसके कारण हमें यह कठिनाई हो रही है और मैं सोचती हूं कि गवर्नमेंट को भी इतनी कठिनाई हुई है कि वह सिफारिशों को इम्पलीमेंट करने में इतनी देर लगाने पर विवश हुई।

महोदया, सब से पहले मैं पत्रकारों की स्थिति सुधारने के बारे में ही कुछ कहना

चाहूंगी, हालांकि इस पर अभी बहुत कुछ कहा गया हैं, किन्तु जिन लोगों से हम देश हित की महान् जिम्मेदारी को संतुलन के साथ निभाने की आशा करते हैं यदि उनके मानसिक संतुलन को हम बनाये नहीं रखेंगे और उन को बराबर आर्थिक कष्टों और कठिनाइयों में फंसाये रखेंगे तो मैं सोचती हूं कि पत्रकारों की स्थिति हम कभी भी सुधार नहीं पायेंगे। इसलिये मेरा यह अनुरोध हैं कि मिनिमम वेज की जो सिफारिश की गई हैं उसको शीघ्रातिशीघ् स्वीकार किया जाय। पहले हमें बड़ी आशा थी कि प्रेस कमीशन ने प्रोमोशन, रिटायरमेंट बेनिफिट, नौकरी खत्म होने के बाद ग्रैचुएटी आदि एमीनटीज के बारे में जो सिफारिशें की हैं उन्हें सरकार बहुत शीघ् ही स्वीकार करेगी और सरकार की किसी न किसी घोषणा से हमें पता चल जायेगा कि कितने दिनों में वे सिफारिशें इम्पलीमेंट होने वाली हैं, किन्तु लोक सभा में माननीय मिनिस्टर महोदय की जो स्पीच हुई हैं उसने सारे पत्रकार समुदाय में एक बड़ी भारी निराशा सी उत्पन्न कर दी हैं। मैं उनसे अनुरोध करूंगी कि जब पूरा समाज और पूरा जनसमुदाय उनके साथ हैं तो उनको इस बात में कोई भी झिझक नहीं होनी चाहिये। यदि उनको कोई कठिनाई अनुभव होती थी तो उसे उसी समय अनुभव करना चाहिये था जिस समय कि प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट बन रही थी और उसके अनुसार प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट में एक निर्णय देना था। यही बात प्राइस पेज शेड्यूल के बारे में हैं। जब एक बात स्वीकार की जा चुकी हैं तो उसके लिये सरकार का इस प्रकार झिझकना, सरकार के ऊपर और प्रेस कमीशन के योग्य सदस्यों के ऊपर एक अविश्वास सा पैदा करता हैं। इसलिये मुझे आशा हैं कि माननीय मिनिस्टर महोदय जो काम, जो घोषणा, उस हाउस में नहीं कर सके वह इस राज्य सभा में अवश्य ही कर के लोगों के हृदय में एक नये विश्वास और एक नई आशा की लहर उत्पन्न करेंगे।

महोदया, प्रेस कौंसिल के विषय में भी अभी बहुत कुछ कहा गया हैं। कुछ सदस्यों ने एक अजीब सी हालत बताई हैं लेकिन उसमें बिल्कुल साफ किया गया हैं कि जो १३ वर्किंग जर्नलिस्ट्स हैं वे अवश्य ही रखे जायेंगे और इसके माने यह भी नहीं हैं कि १३ से अधिक नहीं रखे जायेंगे। यह तो एक मिनिमम नम्बर दिया गया हैं। उसके साथ ही साथ तमाम न्यूज एजेन्सीज, एडवर्टाईजिंग कौंसिल्स तथा न्यूजप्रिंट कारपोरेशन्स आदि के सदस्य भी होंगे, इसलिये उसके बारे में कोई चिन्ता करने की आवश्यकता नहीं हैं। प्रेस कौंसिल का निर्माण तुरन्त होना चाहिये, ऐसी सिफारिश मैं फिर से एक बार किये देती हूं क्योंकि इससे केवल प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता की ही रक्षा नहीं होगी बल्कि पूरे व्यवसाय की उन्नति हो जायेगी। मैं यह भी चाहती हूं कि व्यवसाय में शामिल होने वाले तमाम लोगों की ट्रेनिंग, शिक्षण और भर्ती आदि की व्यवस्था के लिये शीघ् ही एक प्रेस इंस्टीट्यूट भी कायम किया जाय, जिसकी सिफारिश भी जोरदार शब्दों में प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट में की गई हैं।

महोदया, भारतीय भाषाओं के पत्रों के बारे में भी काफी चर्चा हुई हैं। मेरा भी यही अनुमान हैं कि जब तक भारतीय भाषाओं के पत्रों को विकास के लिये पूर्ण सहायता नहीं मिलेगी, तब तक हमारे समाचारपत्र उद्योग का पूर्ण विकास नहीं हो सकेगा।

श्रीमती उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्रीमती चन्द्रावती लखनपाल) : समय हो गया हैं।

श्रीमती सावित्री देवी निगम : थोड़ा सा दो मिनट और।

इसी तरह न्यूज सर्विस टैरिफ के बारे में जो एक रीजनेबिल स्केल फिक्स करने की सिफारिश हैं वह भी अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हैं। एडवर्टाईजिंग कौंसिल और एडवर्टाइजमेंट कोड की जो सिफारिश हैं, उसको हमें प्राथमिकता देनी होगी क्योंकि जब तक उसे

[श्रीमती सावित्री देवी निगम]

प्राथमिकता नहीं देंगे तब तक जो ज्वाइंट पेपर्स हैं वे सारे एडवर्टिजमेंट खुद हड़प कर लेंगे और छोटे पत्रों को कभी भी एडवर्टिजमेंट का लाभ उठाने का अवसर नहीं मिलेगा।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI CHANDRAVATI LAKHANPAL) : Please wind up.

P.M.

श्रीमती सावित्री देवी निगम : तथापि प्रेस कमीशन रिपोर्ट में बड़ी उदारता के साथ प्रेस कमीशन के सदस्यों ने यह सिफारिश की है कि पी० टी० आई० के डाइरेक्टर्स के साथ अब तक जो सम्बन्ध था वह एक ट्रस्ट बनने के बाद भी मेनटेन किया जायगा, फिर भी मुझे बड़ा खेद है कि पी० टी० आई० के वर्तमान डाइरेक्टर्स ने इस प्रकार के शिकायती पत्रों और इस प्रकार के परिपत्रों से जनता को अप्रोच किया है और प्रेस कमीशन रिपोर्ट के खिलाफ इस प्रकार के विरोधाभास का वातावरण बना दिया है हालांकि प्रेस कमीशन के सदस्यों ने साफ साफ कहा है कि वे लोग यह नहीं चाहते कि जो वर्तमान डाइरेक्टर्स हैं उनका सम्बन्ध प्रेस ट्रस्ट से अलग कर दिया जाय, बल्कि वे चाहते हैं कि उनका सम्बन्ध बाद में भी बना रहे। लेकिन साथ ही वह चाहते हैं कि उनको कंट्रोल करने के लिए जो सिफारिशें की गई हैं उनका इस तरह विरोध करना अनुचित है। उन्हें यह सोच लेना चाहिए कि जिस प्रकार जमाना बदलता जा रहा है, जिस प्रकार सब जगह शोषण और पूंजीवाद का अंत हो रहा है, उसी प्रकार अखबारी क्षेत्र में भी प्रेस ट्रस्ट की या ट्रस्ट के डायरेक्टरों की जो नीति है वह चलने वाली नहीं है। इसलिए उन्हें चाहिए कि तुरन्त ही कमीशन की जो सिफारिशें हैं उनका समर्थन करें और उनमें पूरा पूरा सहयोग दें। मैं यह कहूंगी कि उन्होंने छोटी छोटी बातों को लेकर तो इतना तूफान बनाया है, पर जो असली बातें हैं, उनकी उन्होंने क्यों सफाई पेश नहीं की। जिस चेंजओवर की पी० टी० आई० के डाइरेक्टर्स बड़ी तारीफ करते हैं, उस चेंजओवर के बाद उन्होंने इस बात का **जवाब** क्यों नहीं दिया कि पी० टी० आई० के एक डायरेक्टर साहब ने 'ए' दर्जे की सेवा **का लाभ** उठा कर भी 'बी' दर्जे के हिसाब से पैसे दिए। इसके अतिरिक्त पी० टी० आई० के चेयरमैन साहब ने इस बात का जवाब क्यों नहीं दिया कि जो पूंजीपति हैं, जिनका प्रेस ट्रस्ट से सीधा सम्बन्ध होता था, उनके इंटरेस्ट की खबरों को खूब प्रकाशन दिया जाता था लेकिन **जो** खबरें उनके विरुद्ध होती थीं उनको दबाया जाता था। इसी तरह की अन्य कई इंपोर्टेन्ट बातें हैं, उनका जवाब न दे कर क्यों पी० टी० आई० के डाइरेक्टर्स ने उन्हीं बातों पर तमाम पैम्फलेट्स इश्यू किये हैं जिन पर गम्भीरतापूर्वक विचार करने के बाद भी हम लोगों की सहानुभूति उत्पन्न नहीं हो सकी। महोदया, इसके अतिरिक्त.....

उप सभाध्यक्षा (श्रीमती चन्द्रावती लखनपाल): अब खत्म कीजिए। आपने १५ मिनट लें लिये हैं।

श्रीमती सावित्री देवी निगम : एक मिनट और। प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार की नियुक्ति के बारे में पी० टी० आई० ने जो आब्जेक्शन रेज किया है, मैं कहती हूं वह भी कोई उचित नहीं है, क्योंकि प्रेस रजिस्ट्रेशन आफ बुक्स अमेंडिंग बिल और साथ ही आंकड़े इकट्ठे करने के सम्बन्ध में जो दूसरे बिल हैं, उनके मातहत भी वही पावर्स, वही शक्तियां लोगों को मिली हुई हैं जो कि प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार की नियुक्ति के बाद उसको मिलने वाली हैं। इसलिए यह कोई नई बात नहीं है, यह तो पहले से ही स्वीकृत सी बात है।

महोदया, इसके बाद मैं एक दो शब्द यू० पी० आई० के बारे में.....

उप सभाध्यक्षा (श्रीमती चन्द्रावती लखनपाल): लेकिन आपका समय खत्म हो चुका है।

श्रीमती सावित्री देवी निगम : अच्छा, तो मैं समाप्त करती हूं।

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: Madam, it is indeed a happy occasion that at last we are in a position where we have been given the august permission by the hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting to discuss the Press Commission Report. Madam, when in the last Session the matter was raised, he said that there was no point in the matter being discussed in a vacuum and that the recommendations were being considered by the Cabinet and he assured us that we would be able to have a far more fruitful discussion now but it seems that he just wanted these four months to create an even greater vacuum. Of course,, it is gratifying to note that at the end of these four months, at least the Minister has been able to tell us how many pages the report consists of. He has been able it least to tell us that he is aware of some of the recommendations which all his colleagues cannot claim today. But we must not allow these dilatory tactics to continue. He says that he will bow and will listen in all humility, crowned with a reel of phones, so to say, he will listen to the opinions of the august Members of this House and so on and so forth. It remains to be seen whether at the end of this discussion we find that the Government will take speedy steps to iirplement the recommendations on the basis of suggestions that may be received from the floor of this House. Of course it was also gratifying at the same time to hear the hon. Minister pay fulsome tributes to the various Members of the Commission, to their qualifications and to their achievements in producing this report but all the same one felt that this was just to lull the awareness of the Members of the House and to prepare the ground to reject some of these recommendations because already we find from the assurances that he has given in the other House that there is room for us to be apprehensive. I will come to that later but I must say that again and again, as I was listening to those few brief words of his, detailing the number of pages of the report and so on, reminded me of what Shakespeare once said. Shakespeare said:

> "Faith, there have been great men that have flattered the people but who have never loved them."

I think it is very apt today that we remember that warning and not to be carried away by all the flattery and all the bouquets that have been thrown around this morning by the hon. Minister.

Let me go straight now into the findings of the Commission. Having paid tributes to the Members of the Commission, to the achievements and to the report, then the Minister immediateJy went on to say: "Of course in spite of the fact that they were all such well-read men so well qualified. In spite of the fact that such a great deal of work was put in by the Commission, at the same time, the recommendations were very vague." This is where he keeps the back-door open so that he can slip through that door the moment any one pins him down to the recommendations based on the findings of the Comnvssion to whom he has paid all these tributes. All I can say is, that for him, as for many, the word is of little use to those who cannot read it . In thi?- case of course instead of the 'word' we might say 'the report' is of little use to those who cannot read it.

Let us take the main recommendations one by one. First the Commission has gone into great detail as *to* the state of the press in this country today. Because without going into that, obviously they were not in r. position to make any recommendations. They were really exploring completely new ground and therefore their investigations have been very very detailed and they have taken great pains to cover every aspect of the press as it operates in this coun try. We find that one of their conclusions is as follows:

> "We found that out of a total o. three hundred and thirty dailies, five owners control twentr-nin*"

[Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan.] papers and 31'2 per cent, of the circulation, while fifteen owners control fifty-four newspapers and 50-1 per cent, of the circulation. There ! can, therefore, be no denying the i fact that there already exists in the Indian newspaper industry a considerable degree of concentration. We feel that there is a danger that this tendency might further develop in the future. We are of the opinion that it would not be desirable in the interest of freedom of choice that this tendency should be accentuated."

I will not read any future from this report but already those who have preceded me have also referred to this point that one of the things to which the Commission refers again and again is the particular state that the press industry is in today and to warn the Government that steps should speedily be taken to prevent a growing monopoly in the Press if the freedom of the Press is to be guaranteed in the country. And further they have pointed out later in their Report how this concentration in the hands of a few leads to a lowering of the standards of journalism, how it leads to financial manipulations and also to the exploitation of the working journalists. That is why they are against creating a monopoly and recommendations have been made by the Press Commission that this growing tendency should be immediately checked. The Commisssion therefore, have made the recommendation that efforts should be made, steps should be taken for diffusion of the ownership and control of newspapers. They have said that one of the things that should be done is that in the various chain newspapers, all existing accounts should be separated and this would be one of the steps that would enable the Government to keep a check on the growth of any monopolistic tendency.

Next, Madam, I come to the question of the news agencies and the recommendations mMe by the Commission as regards these agencies. With regard to the working of the Press Trust of India, this is what the Commission have said:

> "We have considered carefully various details relating to the working of the Press Trust of India.",

and after referring to certain apprehensions, the Report, goes on to say:

> "It seems clear that apprehensions of this nature are widely held in the newspaper profession and the trend of the evidence tendered by those connected with the Press Trust of India Board has created the impression that these apprehensions are not unjustified."

The apprehensions were that the men cannot function effectively on account of divisions and factions. As regards the recommendations of the Commission in relation to these Agencies, in a statement which the hon. Minister laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha, he has said that the Commission have addressed these recommendations to the shareholders and the managements of the two news agencies concerned and Government trust that they will receive their serious consideration, and that Government will be glad to consider any scheme put forward by them for any changes in their constitution and would prefer to treat both these news agencies on the same footing in this matter. But I do not see why there should be such a lot of diffidence on the part of the Government, when I know they are always ready to consider this and the other. But here they are waiting to hear more and more opinion so that confusion may be worse confounded. Here they have these recommendations, as a result of the hard labour put in by the Press Commission and the recommendations are very very clear-cut. On the one hand the recommendation with regard to the Press Trust of India is to turn it into a public corporation. The recommendation with regard to the U.P.I, is also very clear-cut, that it should be turned into a public trust. But still, having read

these recommendations, having studied this Report, still they say, further recommendations must be forthcoming before Government can make up their mind. It seems as if the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting lias an hon. Minister who thinks he is having a portfolio which wants him to wait and think and be even more dilatory in his actions than any other Ministry in the Government.

Madam, next I want to touch on another point and that relates to the service conditions of the working Journalists. This is another section about which very clear-cut recommendations have been made by the Press Commission. The hon. Minister has on an earlier occasion in the other House, given an assurance—one of his many assurances, as usual—that this auestion is going to be taken up, that a Bill is coming along very shortly before Parliament and that this Bill wiii guarantee this, that and the other. But we are not very clear what it is. I would ask, after all this work has been put in, why can't an immediate assurance be given to the working journalists and to the Members of Parliament that those recommendations contained within the Press commission's Report will be implemented and that a minimum living wage will be guaranteed to the working journalists? Why is it so difficult to guarantee this minimum living wage to them? Why is it that we near yet of talks and references to egionaJ boards being set up? Why should this question be re-opened all over again? Why is it that those who hold the purse-strings in the press industry today have to come first and the journalists, the poor journalists come as a very miserable second? This reminds one of the old old song—I could almost hear the hon. Minister singing it—that for the poor journalist there will be a pie in the sky when he dies. We know how a poor journalist in the city of Calcutta, because of the conditions of his work, seeing absolutely no future for himself, not having such confidence in the possibility of Bills coming up I here, was driven to suicide. Madam, it is not a matter for smiling, as I see some hon. Members there being inclined to. This is a very serious matter and I hope the hon. Minister will take it seriously also. In their Report it will be found that the Press Commission went into every aspect of the question of the conditions of work and employment of journalists and that is why you find that in places where wages are higher, these regional variations and others have also been taken into consideration. They have said that those who live as journalists and start work in Delhi will get a higher wage than those starting work in Travancore-Cochin or some other place. So all these details have been gone into and I really fail to understand why once again this matter has got to be gone into, why once again a few more people should gather together in a regional board and the wiolo matter re-opened, while the poor journalists have to continue in the conditions that they have beer putting up with for so long a time.

Now I come to my final point which is closely allied to this question of the working journalists and that this matter of the price-page schedule. This is a very important point, because on this hang all the recommendations for the reorganisation of the press industry in our country, and for safeguarding the freedom of the press and guaranteeing free expression and reporting of information and guaranteeing a proper living and working conditions for the journalists and so on. We have been told by the Indian Language Newspapers Association which is the association representing the majority of newspapers in this country, the language newspapers, fiat they are in favour of this price-page schedule. The important point about this is that they are in tavour o* it and in saying that they are in ia/our of it, they say at the same, time that it is only if this recommendation is implemented that it will ever be possible to fulfil the other recommendations with regard to the case of the working journalists 1 That is why it is very important. Of

[Shrimati Parvathi Krishr.an.]

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::ourse, we will find, as usual, lot of quibbling, a lot of playing around words, and jugglery with figures and we will be told that after all, if so and so is asked to pay so much to his journalists, then his paper will run at a loss and at the same time this question of price-page schedule will be pigeon-holed as a separate issue altogether. But obviously, the Commission which was an expert body appointed, did not look at the issue in a pigeon-holed manner, for they f ook an overall picture and therefore it would be entirely wrong and most dangerous to separate the one issue from the other and keep each in its own separate incubator. Madam, this question of price-page schedule on the one hand hits the bigger newspaper owners, the people who have been referred to as the press barons—though personally I am not so happy about that word "baron" and could think of a far more juicy term, but let that pass—while it hits these people, it certainly is being welcomed by the majority of the smaller newspapers. Therefore, the hon. Minister who is so willing and who is going out of his way to gather in every opinion that he can find and to consult every interest that is going to be harmed etc. he should take, this opinion into consideration. If this claims to be a country or democracy that is leading towards a socialistic pattern of society, then certainly those in the minority would inevitably have to bow to the interests of the majority, and the .majority in this case being the smaller newspaper owners, the owners of the smaller English newspapers and the working journalists in whose hands remains the future of the Indian Press and it vs only if their demands are acceded to, it is only if their interests are answered that finally you will be able to battle against the growth of monopoly, you will be able to guarantee against any growth or spreading of the so-called yellow journalism. This is very important. I feel that the question of the price-page schedule should be taken up immediately along with these other recommendations made by the Press Commission. I would, therefore, request the hon. Minister, to put behind him once and for all. his dilatory tactics and to remember that today it is not in a vacuum that we are discussing this question; whether the Cabinet has discussed it or not, whether the Cabinet has thought fit to come to any conclusion or not, it is not a vacuum because we have before us the Report—we have, before us, the recommendations—and it is on a very concrete basis that this discussion has been taking place. When one of the arguments given is that the freedom of the Press is being guarded and that is why he is so nervous, I can see, and he does not want in any way to harm the freedom of the Press,— it really is rather ununderstandable because, if one takes these recommendations one after the other, with regard to the prices, with regard to the price-page schedule, with regard to checking the growth of monopoly and so on, one finds that evory single recommendation made is really to create the freedom of the Press in this country and certainly not in any way to decrease it in any manner. Just as the hon. Minister wanted Mr. Mahanty to interpret yellow journalism, it would be very, very interesting, I think, to know what his interpretation is of yellow journalism.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I will do it.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: From the way he has been making speeches, from the manner in which he has been speaking in the various press conferences that inevitably have got to be reported—he being the Minister—from the various statements that he has been making, it seems in fact that it is the freedom of those very people who today are trying to create a monopoly within the Press in our country that is to be safeguarded, the freedom, for instance, of a certain newspaper owner, a person who, having no roots in his part of the country controls a whole chain of papers thai appear in the local language. How if

the local Press to develop? How is the local language to develop when somebody who is totally ignorant of it gets up and starts talking about the freedom of the local Press? It is only the freedom of his bank balance. That is not the freedom that we are talking of here. The freedom that we want, we feel, can and will be created only when all the recommendations of the Press Commission are taken together and not piecemeal because every fi'.gle recommendation is interlinked with every other recommendation. Therefore, I would like finally, m the words of Emerson, to say to the hon. Minister, "Do not craze yourself with further thinking but go about the business".

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: Madam, I have very great pleasure in giving expression to my high sense of appreciation of the work done by the Press Commission. When one looks at the enormous nature of the job, one feels a sense of admiration at the way they have gone about it, particularly, Madam, when one looks to the non-co-operative attitude that was taken up by the big Press owners in India to the various enquiries of the Commission, one realises how arduous the task was. It is very regrettable to note that those people who should be the trustees of the eyes of the ration, the Press, people Who should have had a better sense of responsibility, have not thought it fit to answer the questionnaires of the Commission: not oniy that they did not think it fit to answer the notices issued to them until at last the Press Commission was forced to issue a show cause notice under section 4 of the Commission of Enquiries Act. Only then could the Press Commission command the services of these people. This explains the nature of our Press Lords or Press Barons—whatever ihey are. The hon. Shri Mahanty pointed out how our Press started rnd under what difficulties it started functioning. I appreciate that; I myself wanted to give the instances which he has quoted. Credit must go to those Englishmen who fought with the Englishmen themselves—the East India Company—in order to establish the freedom of expression. Side by side with that, I would like to describe the situation of the Press in mother country which would give a very very interesting incident. I am referring to the incident which occurred during the time of Thomas Jefferson's Presidentship of America. It is very interesting. A gentleman wanted an interview with the President but did not expect that he would get it. He was surprised to see that this interview was granted. When the gentleman was before the President, he placed a folded newspaper before the President and said. "Mr. President, you should hang the editor of this newspaper for imputing your character". Jefferson slowly pored over fie paper. "No", he replied. "I do no* wish to do that. For all the mud they have slung ~~~ r„s j could charge them with treason But this is a free country and everyone must have a say." The aroused visitor took exception. "What Government enn permit itself to be rebuked by knaves and half-wits! In my country it would be cause for a duel!" Jefferson warmed his hands over the crackling wood fire and mused: "The times are changing, my friend. Take that paper and show it to your countrymen. They will know what America really is." "Let me assure you", he continued, "that I would prefer newspapers without a government rather than a government without newspapers". The dignitary withdrew in surprise and awe. Later he wrote a mystifying despatch to his emperor outlining his view on the new American democracy: "The Government is one, Sir. which you can neither feel nor see".

Unfortunately, Madam, the Press in India had to work under oppressive conditions and it is not surprising, therefore, that the Press today still smoulders with the same discontent. The proper question to be considered while dealing with this Report is whether State interference in the matter of the Press and journalism is called for; if it is called for, to what

[Shri M. Govinda Reddy.] extent? It is admitted on all hands and the Commission has recommended a large measure of State interference with regard to the organisational side, the industrial side, with regard to the ownership of newspapers, with regard to business management, with regard to the relations that should sxist between the management and the workers, with regard to the relations between the big and small papers, with regard to the profits and so on. With regard to all these matters the Press Commission has made numerous recommendations advocating S^ate interference.

While going through the proceedings of the Debate that took place in the other House in this connection, I felt that there was a doubt in the mind of Government about the extent of their interference with the Press. I am convinced, Ma lam, that the State should interfere in the matter of the Press. Whatever ispect it may be, whether it is the i rganisa-tional side or the industriL. side or me business side or the relations between the owners, the editors and the working staff or if it is the profit, the State should interfere. I say that the days of *laissez faire* have gone; the State should not and cannot say, "Here are the papers; it is their birthright to run a paper What car. we do? Let them run the paper in any manner they want to." The State cannot say, "Here are the papers; let them do anything they like". The State cannot also say, "Here are the papers, big and small. If the small papers do not survive, we have aothing to do".

SHRI S. MAHANTY: What about Jefferson whom you quoted?

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: Please listen to me. I will answer you. The conditions during Jefferson's time were different but still .....

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Then why juote him?

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: We are cherishing the freedom of the Press as much as he did. And that is more so because we need a free press much more than America needed then. As everybody knows, we have a socialistic pattern of society as our goal, and this is a country which has not got a discerning public as that of England or as that of U.S.A. or as that of any advanced country. Unfortunately the bulk of our people are illiterate. They are not only illiterate, they are unwary. They cannot see through things and news and therefore things have to be interpreted to them and the one agency which interprets things which interprets the policies of the Government, which develops an outlook in the people is the press. That, I say, is a mass education agency Before we can take up, b:fore the Government can take up mass education, tnis is die only agency we have where people get educated and that is why I say that the Government should exercise vigilance to see that this task is discharged freely and efficiently by the Press.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Very good.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: So I feel, Madam, that the aim of the Government and the Press is a common one, and if we do not realize that, there is no justification for the Press and there will be no justification for the Government either.

(Interruption)

My time is limited; I would answer you at other times. Therefore, Madam, the Government should exercise vigilance in these matters and then should shape its policy accordingly and not plead non-interference; or plead a *laissez faire* policy in whatever shape it may be, whether in the matter of reforming the few press laws that are there or the restrictions that the Gov ernment should put under artich-19(2) of the Constitution or the Penal Code sections—124A, 153 A—or the Criminal Procedure Code section 144-—

and so on and so forth, whether in this matter or in the matter of creating agencies to control the big newspapers, the big business, whatever it is the State should regulate and should control. That is my view.

Having said this I would come to a very important point of the small press *versus* the big press. Well, it must be said that the small press has been stifled by the big press. Instances have been given and I do not go to those instances. I am making only suggestions so that the Government should encourage the development and growth of this small press, the small business.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI CHANDRAVATI LAKHANPAL) I You have only two minutes more.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: I have taken only five or six minutes. I must get about seven minutes more. 1 won't take much time unnecessarily. The suggestion I was going to make is this that the Press Commission do not seem to have fully realized the position that would prevail when Hindi is going to be the national language. So then the days of the English dailies will be over. And as long as English was a current language and as long as English dailies could be run, the small papers were assured of a reading public who did not know English. They were safe there. But what is to happen to these small papers when Hindi becomes the medium of the country, when English papers go out of use? The owners of English papers naturally will come into that field and build monopolies there also. This is a danger which the small papers run and this is a danger which the country may have to face sometime later, very soon. After a decade at least we may have to face that and what is to happen to those journalists who are only English correspondents? They have to find a living. We have to employ them and we have to train them in Hindi. Well, these are problems which the Government have to face.

Then with regard to agencies I have a word to say. As chairman of the board of directors of a Mysore Kan-nada daily I fought with the P.T.I, for getting concessions in the matter of news. Well, Madam, the rates which they prescribed for teleprinters were killing. No local newspaper in Mysore except one could afford to pay those rates. So we represented to them: Look here. These small papers could survive; you dole out any news you will but take only what we can afford to pay. We explained our circumstances; we even gave them tea. But, no, they would not budge an inch That shows that these agencies did not have the interests of the small papers at heart and it is very doubtful whether they will ever have unless the Government comes ana intervenes. Of course the Press Commission has made various suggestions and there is no time for me to go into them, but the Government should realize that these small papers are being throttled in this way and some sort of encouragement should be given to them. Well, I had some suggestions to give in the matter of such encouragement, but as you say there is no time, I am cutting that short.

Now in regard to yellow journalism I am sorry Mr. Mahanty went to the extent of not only condoning yellow journalism but even extolling yellow journalism. Unfortunately he quoted the instance of U.K. In U.K. although there is no controlling law in this respect still the sense of responsibility of the correspondents and the sense of responsibility of the proprietors is so high that yellow journalism does not happen. Of course in two instances it happened, once in 1937, and you will find it in the same Royal Commission's Report. In 1937 some papers referred to some bereaved families in a disparaging manner, which caused them pain.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI CHANDRAVATI LAKHANPAL) ! YOU have taken about 14 minutes.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: Well, I will finish. The Home Secretary

'Shri M. Govinda Reddy.] •hen called the attention of the proprietors of those newspapers to these items and the newspaper proprietors condemned the statements. And in 1946 again there was such a thing for which the associations of newspapers, the British guilds of nev/spapers and also the proprietors held a joint conference, then they condemned these writings and evolved a code of conduct condemning all such scurrilous criticism and journalism, and therefore yellow press has no place anywhere and let it not have a place in India, and let not Mr. Mahanty make other people go blue by himself becoming yellow.

SHRI JASPAT ROY KAPOOR: Madam, are we dispersing at five or continuing?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI CHANDRAVATI LAKHANPAL) I We gO On till five.

BEGUM AIZAZ RASUL (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, the Press Commission Report has been before the public for more than a year and the matter being of vital importance both to the press and the public it had ample time to be discussed in the press as well as on the platform. There was unanimity of opinion that the Commission had done its work well, had made an exhaustive survey of the existing conditions, laid down its views impartially and made a number of useful suggestions. What is more, on all controversial points there had been a great measure of unanimity. As such it has been generally welcomed.

Now, Madam, the question of the future of the press is a very important question. The press plays a very vital part in the life of the community and any interference in its working or any measure that the Government might take which would restrict the I freedom of the press will be a grave development. Freedom of the press 1 is a democratic institution not known ; in totalitarian States. We have therefore to go slow in this matter and view each proposal on its merits. I 'nay say here, Madam, that I neither belong to the honourable profession of a journalist nor do I represent the so-called Press Barons about whom one hears so much and on whom a great deal of vituperation is hurled. 1 stand here as a representative of the reading public of this country. Unfortunately that reading public only consists of about 7 per cent of the population of India. In this regard also the people as well as the Government and the Press have a very great responsibility. The development of literacy and the development of democratic institutions are the great responsibilities of the Press. We have been told by the Press Commission that there are 330 daily newspapers in this country altogether with a circulation of about 26 lakhs. Now, if we see the circulation figures of papers in other countries, we can realise the true position. I was staggered when I was in Japan to learn that "Asahi" alone had a circulation of about 5 million a day. We also know what circulation the big newspapers in England have. There is one newspaper to every two persons in that country. From all these we can know how low is the percentage of our reading public and as such the responsibility of the Press becomes all the more greater.

Not having much time at my disposal I will try to concentrate on a few points only. Madam, much has been said about the working journalists. I agree entirely with the recommendations of the Press Commission-as well as with what has been said by hon. Members of this House that the Government should give the highest priority to the service conditions, emoluments etc. of the working journalists and the relevant recommendations of the Press Commission should be given effect to as quickly as possible. It is better to have a hundred well-conducted class I papers in the country rather than have a thousand rags who eke out a precarious existence. A low-paid discontented jour nalist could very well become *s* menace to society unless one is ar idealist which is hard to come across

We must not forget the past proud record of the newspapers of our country. Even foreigners—people like Beverly Nichols—have been constrained to admit the high standard of the Press in India and to that the poor working journalist has made a very great contribution. Madam, when we speak of the Press and when we throw vituperation upon the so-called Press Barons, we must not forget at the same time that it was they who came forward and started these newspapers at a time when there was a great need for them in the country and thus filled a very great vacuum. I hope that the chains of newspapers about which we hear so much will be broken soon but at the same time one must realise that they are doing some service to the country. I am in complete agreement with the recommendations of the Press Commission that apart from these metropolitan papers which we have in India there should be more and more small papers—language papers—in the districts. For this one has to find money and my own suggestion is that if the industrialists can be taxed to some extent the money thus procured may be put into a fund of some sort, and this will help a great deal towards helping the already existing language newspapers in the country and starting new ones.

I would also like to support the Press Commission's recommendation about the State Trading Corporation for the import of newsprint. At present the big chains of newspapers are purchasing rewsprint and selling it to others. It is very necessary that the Government should have control over newsprint.

Now, I come to the very important question of news agencies. We have really only two news agencies in-our country; the third one is a very small *nnp.* The two big agencies are the P.T.I, and the U.P.I. I should like to draw the attention of the House as well as of the Government to the fact that the revenue of this P.TJ. comes entirely from the newspapers. It is about Rs. 40 lakhs per annum which the newspapers subscribe while the A. I. R. subscribes only Rs. 3 lakhs and 8,000 to this agency. If you see other countries, for instance, in U.K. rougn-ly 30 per cent of the revenues of Reuters comes from B.B.C. which only caters for international news. In India the percentage is not even 12 per cent, out of which 6 per cent is subscribed by Government of India through A.I.R. The Report of the Unesco has published a survey of the news agencies of the world and if the Government has seen it, they will know what other Governments have done for their own news agencies, how much support and sustenance those news agencies are receiving from their respective national governments. I should like to know from our Government what they have done for our news agencies. It is all right to criticise them and to say all sorts of things but we have to see that these news agencies, unlike newspapers, have neither circulation nor advertisement revenue. They are being wholly sustained by the Press alone and if the Government comes into the picture it is only as a customer. We must realise that the Government have a certain responsibility. Are you interested in the development of the Press in this country? If so how are you going to encourage it? We have also to enlist the support and co-operation of the reading public. On the many projects and public activities which the Government have launched, we must have informed public opinion. Our foreign policy is playing a very important part today and we know to what extent the news agencies help in this the reputation of their own news from India to other countries ana they are also disseminating news in the country itself. All the countries in the world are zealous in safeguarding matter-, They are sending out news> agencies and I should like to know what our Government have been doing in this regard. May I know from the Government whether it is true that the P.T.I, had not asked the Press Commission for a loan of Rs. 10 lakhs free of interest which has been

[Begam Aizaz Rasul.] recommended by the Press Commission? Is it also a fact tfoat the Press Commission was constrained to say that the subscription paid to the news agencies was not commensurate with the services rendered by them? I think there is some obligation on the part of the Government to ■ strengthen a national news agency which can voucli for the integrity and impartiality of news which it purveys without fear or favour. Now, the All India Radio reaches 8 lakh homes and the newspapers reach 25 lakh homes. The newspapers naturally contain news that are supplied by these news agencies and therefore it is the duty of the Government to see that the news agencies are helped in a way commensurate with the standards in our country. As I said, we have to see what other countries are doing for their own news agencies. We should nave an authoritative news agency to send out news to outside countries and today there are only these two agencies and it is the duty of the Government to see that they are properly helped. .This matter ha^ been dealt with thS length in the Report of the Press Commission and I would respectfully suggest to the Government that they should not take a hasty decision in this matter, but the representatives of these news agencies as well as of the public and Government should be invited to discuss these things in order to come to certain conclusions.

With these words, Madam, I support the motion.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI CHANDRAVATI LAKHANPAL) I The HoUSe stands adjourned till eleven o'clock tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, We 13th September 1958.