

Is it the pleasure of the House that permission be granted to Shri Thakur Das for remaining absent from all meetings of the House during the current session?

(No hon. Member dissented)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Permission to remain absent is granted.

## PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE

### STATEMENT ON THE FLOOD SITUATION IN ORISSA

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI J. S. L. HATHI): Sir, I lay on the Table, a statement on the flood situation in Orissa. [See Appendix X, Annexure No. 89.]

### DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT OF THE PRESS COMMISSION— *continued*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now we return to the discussion on the Report of the Press Commission. I have here 28 names and the Secretary tells me that more names have come. Well, the Minister will answer only tomorrow, not today, so as to give you more time.

SHRI S. MAHANTY (Orissa): And there is no lunch hour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And so you may sit through the lunch hour and until six o'clock, if you are so inclined, but, as I said, the Minister will reply only tomorrow. And the time for each speaker will be about ten to fifteen minutes. And avoid, as far as possible, personal references.

Dr. Kunzru.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, the limitation that you have placed on the length of the speeches makes it difficult for one to refer to all the points raised by Dr. Keskar yesterday. I shall, however, do my best within the limitation inexorably imposed by you.

First of all, I should like to join Dr. Keskar in paying tribute to the Press Commission for the painstaking manner in which it has collected all the facts and the fairness that it tried to bring to bear on the discussion of every problem. But I feel sure that the Commission was handicapped at the start by its terms of reference which were too wide. It was asked to consider not merely the adequacy of the supply of newsprint in this country, but also the possibility of manufacturing, composing and printing machinery.

I think, this task might well have been entrusted to another committee, leaving the Press Commission to deal with what I may call non-technical matters, the consideration of which should have been its principal task. I may give another illustration of how broad its terms of reference were. The question of the recruitment and training of the working journalists as well as their emoluments and conditions of service is a very big and very important subject. Its importance required that a separate committee should have been appointed to consider the whole matter. Had this been done, we could have had a fuller discussion of those recommendations of the Press Commission which bear on the character of the newspapers, the monopolies and chain groups that may be in existence, their effect on the supply of news to the public and so on. As, however, the Press Commission has dealt with all these matters, it will not be possible for anybody here to ignore any of them but I shall, in the main, confine myself to a discussion of the five points on which Dr. Keskar wanted our opinion yesterday. They were, the Press Council, the Press Trust of India, the price-page schedule, service conditions of the working journalists and the fixation of a minimum wage.

I shall turn first to the Press Council. This is a very important recommendation of the Commission. It is not possible that Government should regulate the working of the news-

[Shri H. N. Kunzru.]

papers in every detail. No statute can infuse into the journalists that sense of responsibility that is required for the vocation that they are following. I, therefore, consider the recommendation of the Press Commission with regard to the appointment of a Press Council, as its most important and basic recommendation. Before I deal with this matter, I should like to state my own view in dealing with this matter and the other matters referred to by Dr. Keskar. The Royal Commission on the U.K. Press which reported in 1949 also recommended the appointment of a Press Council but the observations that it has made on the subject appeal to me so much that I think I would do better if I quoted the words of the Commission rather than try to state my view in my own words. The Royal Commission saw, like our own Commission, that the character of the society was influencing the character of the newspapers to a very large extent. It is not surprising that there should be a conflict between the duties that a newspaper owes to the public and its desire to earn profits. Referring to this divergence of interests, the Royal Commission says, "The problem is not peculiar to the Press but in this sphere it is particularly acute. If the Press is not aware of its responsibilities to the public, it cannot perform its functions adequately; but, if it is not free, it cannot perform them at all. Secondly, the amount of direct pressure which society can afford to put on the Press is very limited. Except in certain well recognised fields responsibilities cannot be enforced by prohibiting the publication of one type of material or enjoining the publication of another because regulation of this kind in the long run damps the free flow of information and discussion and undermines the independence without which the Press cannot give the service required." And then it goes on to say, "In our view, therefore, it is preferable to seek the means of maintaining a proper relationship between the Press and society, not in Government action but in the Press

itself. The sense of vocation to which we referred in paragraph 88 leads us to believe that it will not be sought in vain". I think, we can use the latter words with regard to our own Press which, notwithstanding the lapses pointed out by the Press Commission in a smaller section of the Press, has acted in a praiseworthy way. Now, Sir, if our aim is to be what the Royal Commission places before itself, then we have to consider carefully what the composition of the Press Council should be. The Royal Commission recommended that the Press Council should consist of 25 members including the Chairman and that it should be composed as follows: Eight representatives of newspaper proprietors, four editors, eight other journalists, four lay members and the Chairman. The Chairman was to be nominated by the Lord Chief Justice and Lord President of the Court of Session. Besides, the Council was to be a purely voluntary body. Compare this with the composition proposed for our Press Council. It is suggested that our Council should have 25 members, excluding the Chairman, which means that in all there will be 26 members. Out of this, thirteen or more, says the Press Commission, should be working journalists, including working editors and the others are to be drawn from newspaper proprietors, Universities, literary bodies, etc. The professional members will be of at least ten years' standing in the profession. The Chairman is to be selected by the Chief Justice of India. If you want the views of the Press Council to carry not merely legal but also moral authority with the members of the journalistic profession, I think it is necessary that it should be composed, to as large an extent as possible, of journalists themselves. Take the Bar Council or the Medical Council; though they deal with some matters which laymen can understand, nobody has suggested that 50 per cent. of these Councils should consist of laymen because such a mixture of laymen would reduce the authority of these Councils.

This point of view, I think, was present in Shri Rajagopalachari's mind, when he referred to the creation of a Press Council in future in his reply to the debate on the Report of the Select Committee on the Press (Objectionable Matter) Bill, 1951. This is what he said on the subject:

"At some future time I think, the organised Press will frame its own code of professional ethics and discipline and appoint its own council of discipline and ask Government for statutory powers to execute its decisions regarding breaches of discipline by anybody, irrespective of whether one is a member of the organisation or keeps out of it, as in the case of the Bar Council or the Medical Council. There a council of the professional people is given full authority to dismiss people, even though they may not be members, but belong to the profession. The Bar Council can debar a lawyer; the Medical Council can debar a doctor, if he misbehaves. They have got the power and they act with boldness. They have therefore got the power in reality. I think that time will come when the Press organisation will form its council of discipline and ask for powers from the legislature, and the Government will certainly be able to give those powers, and then this Bill,"

that is, the Press (Objectionable Matter) Bill,

"may be torn and thrown into the waste paper basket. If the press organisation offers, thus, to protect the interests of the society as a whole and does not content itself with passing pious and ineffective resolutions, I say, that the Government will be prepared to ask Parliament, whatever Government may then be in power, to pass a law conferring on them these powers and responsibilities just as they have invested the Bar Council and the Medical Council with such powers and this law can then be repealed."

Now, Sir, this quotation shows what Shri Rajagopalachari had in mind,

when he referred to the appointment of a Press Council in future, he thought that it would consist entirely of the members of the journalistic profession. If, however, the Government of India wants to follow the U.K. model, then they may have 20 per cent. of the members as laymen. But, I think, to go as far as the Commission has recommended is to impair the authority of the Press Council, to handicap its efforts to raise the standard of journalism in this country at the very commencement of its career.

Now the second point is whether, when this Council has been put in working order, Government will be prepared to repeal the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act. Well, this question was considered by the Press Commission. Besides we know that the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act will expire, I think, at the end of February 1956, unless its life is extended by the legislature. It may be said, Sir, that as the Press Council has not been appointed and as the Government have had no evidence of its satisfactory working, it will be premature to repeal the Act. But what I want to get from the Government to-day is not so much a declaration with regard to the immediate repeal of the Press Act as a declaration of their intentions with regard to the future, or do they stand where Shri Rajagopalachari did, or have they changed their mind since he referred to the appointment of a Press Council during the discussions on the Press (Objectionable Matter) Bill? That is a point which I should like the Minister to state very clearly.

Well, Sir, I am afraid that in developing this point I have exhausted all my time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Dr. Kunzru. Since the three representatives of the different groups yesterday had enough time and you are the lone representative of the central group—the Independents—here, you may take a few minutes more.

**SHRI H. N. KUNZRU:** Thank you very much, Sir.

I now come to the second point raised by Dr Keskar, namely, the Press Trust of India. Here again, everything depends on one's point of view. As I have already stated my point of view, it will have become clear to hon. Members that I do not approve of the scheme of reorganisation of the P.T.I. suggested by the Press Commission. The Commission noted certain irregularities of which the P.T.I. had been guilty but I think that the Government have been assured during the last two or three years that these irregularities have been removed and that even the working conditions of the persons employed by the Trust have been greatly improved. I was in Poona last year when there was a strike in the office of the P.T.I. and I believe that it was settled by the end of June in a manner satisfactory both to the Trust and to its workers. I think the hon. Minister himself stated in another place that the Trust had removed the irregularities which had been noted by the Press Commission. It therefore seems to me, Sir, that the basis on which the Commission's recommendation was made is weak now. In the second place—this question concerns the shareholders of the Trust—it remains to be seen what view they will express about it. But since the Commission has recommended that this Board should have about 50 per cent of laymen, I think it is necessary to point out that the collection of news is a matter which can be done effectively only by journalists themselves or their representatives. In England, Sir, Reuters is a trust, but all its trustees, I mean the Board of Directors, is appointed by the press itself, by the more important press concerns in England. I think, therefore, that even if the Board of Directors should, in Government's opinion, be reorganised and the shareholders approve of its reorganisation, it would be the duty of the Government to see that the question of the collection of news is handled by competent men, that is, by the

representatives of the press themselves.

Sir, there are other questions relating to the assistance to be given to the press, but unfortunately I cannot refer to them in any detail. I shall only say that if the Press Trust has to the satisfaction of the Government set its house in order, then there is no reason why in the public interest the Government should withhold from it the assistance recommended to be given by the Press Commission only in the case of its reorganisation on the lines proposed by it. There does not seem to be any necessary connection between the two. All that is needed is that the Government should be satisfied that the Press Trust is working properly. If they are satisfied on this point, then it is obvious that they should give the assistance which in the opinion of the Commission the Trust stands in need of.

Now, I shall say a word or two about the condition of the working journalists. I think I have already said that in my opinion it would have been a great advantage to us all had this question been separately discussed, and we would have been able to discuss it much more fully than we can do now. But since this is the only occasion when we shall be able to refer to it, I shall only say that the salary and allowances recommended by the Press Commission do not seem to me to be too high. The basis of classification of urban areas recommended by the Commission seems to me to be sound. I will only ask the Government to look into one thing. The Press Commission has said that those newspapers which could not pay the minimum salary and allowances recommended by them had better go out of existence. Frankly, this is not my point of view, in spite of the great sympathy that I have for the working journalists who have not been treated fairly in the past. Let us consider what is the class of newspapers that, generally speaking, has not been able

to satisfy its employees. It is not the big newspapers that have been attacked by many hon. Members but the smaller newspapers. Of course, there are complaints in every concern. There are complaints in offices under the control of the Government themselves and complaints will continue but I think the most unsatisfactory state of things will be found to prevail only in the case of the smaller newspapers and the smaller language newspapers. The Government should therefore, I think, make district or local enquiries in order to see whether the salary etc. recommended by the Commission will be suitable in all cases. Otherwise, I am in accord with the Commission's recommendation on this point. I also find that the rules relating to leave, gratuity and provident fund are also reasonable and I think may well be accepted by the Government. The Press Commission, while suggesting the minimum salary and allowances that should be paid to journalists, has also recommended what qualifications they should possess. In its opinion, they should have a University Degree or an equivalent diploma or a diploma in journalism and so on. For people with these qualifications, the salary suggested is certainly not too high but there may be papers in which these people cannot be employed owing to the poverty of the paper. I suggest therefore, that the Government, while trying to protect the interests of the working journalists, should also see that the means available to the public of obtaining information from reputable sources do not get unnecessarily restricted.

Lastly, I shall refer to the question of the price-page schedule. This is a subject that has been discussed at considerable length by the Commission but what I would like to say on the subject is that it would not do for the Government to try to strengthen the smaller journals by adopting one or two suggestions of the Commission. They may adopt its recommendation with regard to the price-page schedule; they may also accept its recommendations with regard to advertise-

ments but even if all the recommendations of the Commission are implemented, will they be sufficient to strengthen the position of the smaller papers? I think the capacity of a newspaper to maintain its existence depends on the amount of working capital that it can secure. It is not the machinery and plant that matters so much, though the Commission seems to have laid much stress on this matter, but the working capital. Sir, I have been connected with one or two newspapers, with one newspaper at least which was established in the U.P. many many years ago and I know that although it had hardly any competition to face in the U.P., so far as the Indian public went, yet it had to lose a great deal of money before it could stabilise its position. I think, therefore, that it is not correct to assume that the position of the smaller journals is being endangered only by the unfair competition of the bigger newspapers. The bigger newspapers may have been guilty of unfair practices—I hold no brief for them—but I think that the question of the future of smaller journals requires much more serious attention than the Press Commission has been able to give to it.

As regards the price-page schedule, there is much that can be said in favour of and against it, but on the whole, it seems to me that the recommendation is suitable. The Government will perhaps look into the matter from more points of view than I have been able to, but, broadly speaking, I do not think that any paper will be injured if this recommendation is accepted. To the extent that unfair competition ceases, it will be an advantage not merely to the smaller newspapers but also to the bigger newspapers. Sir, before I conclude this subject, I should like to refer to another aspect of this matter. That has been referred to by the Press Commission and that is the limitation of profits. The Commission has suggested that the profit should be limited to half per cent. above the bank rate

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or to four per cent. of the capital, whichever is higher. Now, Sir, I ask whether this kind of limitation has been imposed on any other industry. Is it fair that such a limitation should be imposed only on this industry?

12 Noon

In England, the Royal Commission on the Press looked into this matter and found that some newspapers or newspaper chains were making a profit of 11 or 12 per cent. or even higher. Nevertheless, it did not recommend any limitation of their profits, because it did not think that the papers were being in any way affected by the existing state of things. There is scarcely any question discussed by our Press Commission which has not, broadly speaking, been discussed by the Royal Commission on the United Kingdom Press. But it has not suggested such a limitation at all.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: (Mysore): There is a gentleman's agreement between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Directors of Industries that they would not increase dividend.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU: Well, I gather from the Royal Commission Report that the newspaper proprietors were earning a higher rate of profit and it has not said anything with regard to the gentleman's agreement between the Chancellor of Exchequer and the newspapers. Well, this agreement may have come since the Commission's Report, but I am not aware of this. In the Royal Commission's Report, I have not seen that. But I suggest another way in which Government can ensure that the profits earned by a newspaper are not utilised solely for the benefit of the shareholders. It can say that, if a reserve is built up, then the money put into that reserve will be exempt from income-tax and so on.

PROF. G. RANGA (Andhra): Then, what will be done with the reserve? That is the additional advantage again.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU: The Commission has suggested that the reserves should be built up and that a portion should be devoted for this purpose. If Government can proceed in this manner, I think that again will have much more effect than the limitation on profits as suggested by the Press Commission.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time-limit will be enforced from now.

SHRI K. MADHAVA MENON (Madras): Though most of the points that I wanted to say would have been said in one form or other in a better way, I want to say that the Press Commission has done very stupendous work and has placed before us a fund of information, useful information, with regard to the various defects facing them. The Commission started its work in October 1952, not in a very happy atmosphere. The Government, as Dr. Keskar has already remarked, had burdened it with too wide terms of reference. The Commission was asked to go into not only the editorial, the managerial, and the proprietorial side of newspapers, but also the industrial side of it. In fact, there was no subject which was beyond the purview of the terms of reference of the Commission. This difficult task was made much more difficult by the hostile attitude of some of the newspaper proprietors and combines who felt that the very appointment of the Press Commission was a sort of indictment on them. Some of them, I am told, refused even to be Members of the Commission. Not only that, some of them also appeared only on the issue of summons and on coercive steps and not of their own accord.

The Press Commission have mentioned in the early paragraphs of Chapter I about the difficulties they had to face. It is a very illuminating and interesting account. Probably that was why Dr. Keskar said in the other House that they find practical

difficulties in implementing the recommendations, of the Commission. The Commission too seems to have taken some responsibility for its recommendations, for Dr. Keskar said in the other House, that the Chairman told him that he wanted to put before him the whole thing and it was possible for him to judge. And Dr. Keskar said that a good solution would be to implement as much of it as possible. Perhaps, that may be the only possible solution.

Sir, I agree generally with most of the recommendations of the Press Commission, though, on a few of them, I feel that much can be said on both sides. Although each one of the recommendations of the Commission is to be taken seriously and considered by the Government and newspaper men, I feel it will not be possible or practicable for the Government to implement all of them, as it might mean too much interference with the Press, which nobody will like. So the Government should be very careful in choosing some of the recommendations which would help the growth of healthy journalism in this country and try to implement them, leaving the rest to be adjusted by the employers and employees by mutual trust and co-operation. With these general remarks, I now come to some of the specific recommendations.

Sir, I will confine myself mainly to the question of minimum wages and the price-page schedule. I want minimum wages to be fixed for journalists. The recommendations of the Commission on Minimum Wages are contained in pages 203 to 212 of Part I of the Report. The Commission says that it would be based on a population basis. I do not want to waste time. The Commission has divided the area into four sections on the basis of population and fixed the minimum wage; Rs. 125 as the minimum salary and Rs. 25 as Dearness Allowance in one place and Rs. 50 in other places. They also say to whom the minimum wages should apply. It should be applied to the employees

of daily, bi-weekly and tri-weekly newspapers and the employees of News Agencies in the first instance, etc. Sir, I do not feel that the minimum wage recommended by the Commission is too high. If it has erred at all, it is on the side of modesty. But I have my doubts about the capacity of some of the papers to pay these wages. What the Commission says in this:

"It is not unlikely that the fixation of such a minimum wage may make it impossible for smaller papers to continue to exist as such. *But we think that if a newspaper cannot afford to pay the minimum wage to the employee which will enable him to live decently and with dignity, that newspaper has no business to exist, although we have got to express our view as to what should be the minimum anywhere in India.*"

Sir, we should not think only of the big newspaper combines and chains and the metropolitan papers. We must think also of the district and mofussil papers. The Commission wants that we must encourage more district papers to come. It must be remembered that the newspaper industry in our country which is still in its infancy is virtually non-profit-making in character and the nature of the capital is small as regards district and mofussil papers. If you exclude the combines and agency chains, most of the newspapers are having a hand-to-mouth existence. The industrial side of the newspaper is yet to be developed and I feel that Government should be slow in regulating this aspect of the industry. The machinery for control of newspapers is virtually in their hands and with the changing of times, the industrial side is having its impact on them. While I entirely agree that there should be a minimum wage, my doubt is whether it should be entirely on a population basis or whether it should be on the capacity to pay. The local conditions should also play a part in this minimum wage and these things

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should be taken into consideration when fixing the minimum wage.

Similarly with regard to profit-sharing or bonus, I find the recommendation is very fair. But here again, the principle is good, but it should be applied to other industries also.

Sir, I come to the much-debated point and it is the question of the price-page schedule. This is a case where it can be safely said that much might be said on both sides. Sir, I can certainly understand and appreciate all the arguments in favour of having a price-page schedule. The Commission has dealt with it on pages 73 to 76 of the Report. There is a possibility of newspaper combines and periodicals with big force behind them smothering a small paper with little resources and capital. They can easily smother a new-comer in the field. I am told that there are papers in England and America where they can run the paper by advertisement revenue alone and one can give the paper to the reader free, if one wants. Such people can easily smother a small paper or a new-comer. That has to be prevented if possible and having a price-page schedule is one of the important ways of preventing that mischief.

The Commission says in paragraph 205 of their Report.....

PROF. G. RANGA: Why quote it? Just say what they say.

SHRI K. MADHAVA MENON: "Newspapers serve as media for the free exchange of information and of ideas. The proper functioning of democracy requires that every individual should have equal opportunity, in so far as this can be achieved, to put forward his opinions.... After examining various schemes that have been put forward for this purpose, we feel that to fix a minimum price at which papers of a particular size can be sold would be the most effective measure to this end. This would no doubt have to be supported by the

other measures that we have recommended regarding unfair practices in the industry." Unless you accept the other portion of the Report, they themselves doubt the feasibility of insisting upon that price-page schedule. Is there not another aspect of the matter? Are we not compelling people to pay more for news and information? Will it not be ultimately a tax on political education and dissemination of full and factual news and an encroachment on the freedom of expression? These are some of my doubts. People want political education and information and news. These are days when people are hankering after news. If a paper has a circulation of a lakh or more, not more than fifteen or twenty thousand will be read by rich or upper middle class men. The remaining readers will be middle class and lower middle class people. And are we not taxing them more by a price-page schedule? And really, increasing the page, with a price-page schedule up to a maximum, puts more money into the hands of newspaper proprietors. I doubt if the fear of a reduction in circulation will deter them from increasing the price. Since there is so much hankering after news and information, the poor man will be compelled to buy at a higher cost and it may become a remedy much worse than the evil.

Sir, let me take an example. A paper like *The Hindu* of Madras, an issue with ten pages, will have to be sold for 2½ annas; or, if they retain the price of two annas, the number of pages will have to be reduced to eight, if the proposed price-page schedule is brought into force. Any increase in the cost of newspapers or any reduction in size.....

DR. B. V. KESKAR: May I interrupt, Sir? There is no proposed price-page schedule. The question under discussion is the principle whether there should be any sort of such restriction. So any such reference can be considered to be only a hypothetical one.



**SHRI K. MADHAVA MENON:** In the report they have suggested three pies per page.

**DR. B. V. KESKAR:** If the hon. Member reads the Report carefully, the Commission have categorically stated that it is not their proposal for a price-page schedule. It is an illustration given by a Member of the Commission.

**SHRI K. MADHAVA MENON:** One of the Members has made this reference for the acceptance of the Government. Any increase in price, or any reduction in reading matter, is against the standards obtaining in other countries, and is not justified on the basis of our national income. (*Time bell rings.*) My doubt, Sir, will be, will we not be levying a tax on the dissemination of news and information, putting a restriction on freedom of expression by having a minimum price for a newspaper? I am told that nowhere in the world has the price-page schedule has been enforced, and the purpose of protecting smaller papers in such circumstances.....

**PROF. G. RANGA:** We have had it ourselves.

**SHRI K. MADHAVA MENON:** During the war and it has put more money into the hands of newspaper combines.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Well, that will do. No dialogue.

**SHRI K. MADHAVA MENON:** As pointed out earlier, the readership of newspapers in this country is yet to be developed. There are only about 25 lakh readers in the country. In my area, Malayalam-speaking area, there are 21 dailies which cover only 1.96 lakhs—nearly 2 lakhs of persons, whereas the Malayalam-speaking population is 150 lakhs. This is low readership in an area which is highest in point of literacy. The reason is that the newspapers have to create an atmosphere in which more people will cultivate the newspaper.....

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** That will do, Mr. Madhava Menon.

**SHRI S. N. MAHTHA (Bihar):** Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful to you for the time you have given me to say a few words on the Press Commission's Report. I would first like to join with the Minister in the praise and encomiums he has placed on the Members of the Press Commission; and, also, to join with him in the condolences he has offered on the sad death of the Chairman and the Secretary of the Commission. They certainly made themselves martyrs into their work, because the great task they discharged must have told on their health.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

In my remarks I would like to confine myself to press agencies principally. I gather from the Report, as also from the information received from other quarters, that we have six foreign agencies operating here in India who style themselves as world agencies. And we have three Indian Press agencies operating here—the U.P.I., the P.T.I. and the Hindustan Samachar. Now, with regard to foreign press agencies, I would like to make two remarks. It is a matter of regret that we do not have anywhere a real international press agency which could present world news without any national colour. The foreign Press agencies operating here in India are—I have not got their names readily before me—one is an American, the second a French; and the third a British, and so on. They have, we must confess, a national slant in the news that they present before us. It is very natural that it should be so. It is therefore that I regret very much that so far, no international Press agency has really come into being. Now, with regard to the three Indian Press agencies, the U.P.I., the P.T.I. and the Hindustan Samachar, the first two are the more important. It is necessary from my point of view that we should have more than one Press agency. And I should think that we are fortunate in having two organised Press agencies in this country—the U.P.I. and the P.T.I.—one acting as a check on the other.

[Shri S. N. Mahtha.]

Now, Sir, I should like to say a few words on the P.T.I., because I find from the Press Commission's Report that the Press Commission have been somewhat uncharitable to the P.T.I. They have made certain remarks about nepotism, about corruption and inaccurate or improper keeping of accounts, which I should think, are not fully justified. It was in the year 1949 that the P.T.I. took over from Reuters and the period of transition went on up to 1952-53. Now, most of these remarks about corruption and nepotism and bad account-keeping relate to the period when the service was under Reuters. And if the Commission had drawn a line of demarcation between the period when the service passed over to the P.T.I. from Reuters, much of the criticism that has been heaped on the head of the P.T.I. could have been saved. I was able to discover that on account of this omission on the part of the Commission of not drawing a line of demarcation, that the P.T.I. received comments even from foreign Press. Now, I shall just read out one or two sentences from what appeared on the 23rd August last year in the "London Times." "The inaccuracy of Indian agencies for which foreigners cannot be blamed is recognised by the Commission. The Report states that there is reason to believe the P.T.I. does not function properly because of internal divisions and factions. It reports that there are charges of nepotism and improper management and that its news service has not been disinterested. It recommends that the P.T.I. should become a public corporation."

I think that in that respect, that is in respect of the P.T.I., being thrown on their shoulders all the blame for the legacy which they had to inherit from the Reuters, was not fair play on the part of the Commission. Now, I should in this respect also say, that whereas the Commission have recommended to the shareholders of the P.T.I., the formation of a public corporation to manage the P.T.I. The idea somehow does not appeal to me.

I should think that the P.T.I. should be managed strictly by the press and by nobody else and should be without any interference from the State or from anybody. Further, I strongly think that so far as the P.T.I. is concerned, we should as Members of Parliament, accept and I would also appeal to the Minister as a Minister of the Government here that he should accept the assurances now given by the present Chairman of the PTI who has stated that from the beginning of 1953 onwards, the P.T.I. has been able to set its house in order and eliminate the irregularities and other complications arising from the transition from one management to another. This claim of the P.T.I. Chairman, I suggest, should be accepted and therefore the idea of a public corporation in my opinion is not necessary even if it were otherwise desirable, which is very doubtful. The comprehensive agreement to which Dr. Kunzru referred, which the P.T.I. Board have arrived at with the workers, is a creditable achievement. If the shareholders even now or at any time desire the P.T.I. to dissolve itself or to change its Directorate, at any time they can do so. I might inform the House further that the P.T.I. have recently democratised their constitution by making its Chairmanship rotational so that the smallest fry in the P.T.I. will now have a chance of becoming the Chairman of the organisation, when its turn comes.

I will say a word about the price-page schedule. That idea appeals to me but I would make only two comments. The first is that the idea of price-page schedule was based to a certain extent on the fact that the price of newsprint was normal at the time the Press Commission reported but now the price has gone up by nearly 50 per cent. and therefore there is an automatic check on the wastage of newsprint. Nevertheless, the price-page schedule may be tried provided it is sufficiently elastic.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: You are stressing your argument in favour of it.

SHRI S. N. MAHTHA: I am only saying that, when you introduce the price-page schedule, you might insist on laying down a floor but not a ceiling. On the ceiling, you should be somewhat elastic, because the price of newsprint is already exercising a restraining influence on the wastage of newsprint by the newspapers. Besides the imposition of a ceiling may result in a sort of control over late news and views.

I consider that the suggestion about the Press Council is a valuable suggestion. But this suggestion should be voluntarily carried out and the council should only exercise a moral authority over the Press; otherwise it will begin to act as a restraint on the free expression of views. The idea that the names of the owners apart from the authors should be periodically published by the newspaper seems to me to be good.

There is one suggestion in the Press Commission report which, they say, is not to be enforced by legislation or compulsion and that suggestion is diffusion of ownership. It is unthinkable to me that a newspaper can be conducted smoothly with several persons possessing a voice in its management and editorial policy. The Commission itself,—it almost appears as an after-thought—notes the dangers and difficulties of this suggestion in paragraphs 1371 and 1372. I consider the report very valuable because newspapers have come to take a place in our lives when we cannot do without them. They almost have come to be a part of our national and our personal life as much as any other mode of communication like Railways or Post Offices or Telegraph offices and we are all very much concerned with the Press and the reforms or improvements we can make in them. I should think we are now in possession of a very valuable report and it is very heartening to hear that the Government will be able to announce their decisions within a week from now. Thank you.

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE (West Bengal): Mr. Deputy Chairman, the Press Commission Report has been before the country for more than a year and it is before the House since yesterday. I join with others in my tribute to the Members of the Commission who have produced such a comprehensive and all-embracing, instructive and informative report, the like of which is scarcely to be seen in other reports.

The Press has been called the Fourth Estate of a realm, a very powerful Estate of which Napoleon is reported to have said:

“Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets. Newspapers are not only a terror to the despots—they are the world’s mirrors and the sentinels of the liberties of a people.”

Sir, I confess to a sense of disappointment that the Members who spoke before me had not laid any stress on the concept of the freedom of the Press. When I think of the Press, my mind instinctively goes to the concept of the Freedom of the Press of which Milton wrote in his *Areopagitica*, in which he proclaimed “Give me liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties,” for which Sheridan thundered in the House of Commons:

“Give me but the liberty of the press and I will give to the Minister a venal house of peers. I will give him a servile and corrupt House of Commons. I will give him the full swing of the patronage of office. I will give him the whole host of ministerial influence. I will give him all the power that place can confer upon him, to purchase up submission and over-awe resistance; and yet armed with the liberty of the press, I will go forth to meet him undismayed. I will attack the mighty fabric of that mightier engine. I will shake down from its height corruption and bury it beneath the ruins of the abuses it was meant to shelter.”

[Shri Satyapriya Banerjee.]  
for which Erskine, whose forensic eloquence has not been surpassed even to this day, in his great speech in defence of Paine said:

"The liberty of opinion keeps governments themselves in due subjection to their duties."

Let me, Sir, come nearer to our own times. The American Commission on a free and responsible Press has said—and it is referred to on page 359 of the Press Commission's Report:

"The freedom of the Press is essential to political liberty. Where men cannot freely convey their thoughts to one another, no freedom is secure. Where freedom of expression exists, the beginnings of a free society and a means of every retention of liberty are already present. Free expression is therefore unique among liberties."

Sir, the freedom of the Press in India, if I may be permitted to say so, is between Scylla and Charybdis, and is being sandwiched between the press barons—I shall not call them the thugs and pindaris of the Press, but shall content myself with calling them the vampires of the press industry—on the one hand and the Government on the other. Sir, there has been an unholy alliance between the press barons, these vampires of the Press, and the Government, the vampires of the people. The Government and the powers that seem to forget the lessons of history, that human liberty cannot be secured unless there is scope for expression of grievances and that the struggle for the freedom of speech has marched hand in hand in the advance of civilisation with the struggle for other great human liberties.

Sir, I have dilated so long on this concept of the freedom of the Press, because I found to my utter dismay and disappointment and sorrow that the majority of the Commission has been very niggardly in granting liberty to the Press and has more often

than not supported the Government in its attempts at the curtailment of those liberties. I shall only refer to two instances. They are the Constitution (First) Amendment Act and the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act. The Commission is pleased to observe:

"We think that there is no case made out for going back to article 19 (2) of the Constitution as it stood before its amendment in 1951."

And in the very same breath the Commission states:

"We think that the words 'in the interest of friendly relations with foreign States' are of a very wide connotation and may conceivably be relied upon for supporting any legislation which may restrict even legitimate criticism of the foreign policy of Government."

And as regards the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act, they say that it is a distinct improvement and they consider that it would be desirable that a special provision like this should remain. In this connection, I think I will be failing in my duty if I did not refer to that minute of dissent submitted by the four members of the Commission who have recommended the abolition of all the press laws which stand in the way of the liberty of the Press.

Before proceeding further, I will give the House some figures which will speak for themselves. There are 330 dailies in our country whose circulation totals 2·5 millions in a population of 360 millions. 270 concerns publish these 330 dailies of which 110 concerns publish 170 dailies and control 80 per cent of the circulation. The capital invested is Rs. 7 crores and the revenue from advertisement is Rs. 5 crores. A small number of five owners control 29 newspapers and 31·2 per cent of the circulation. Fifteen owners control 54 newspapers and 50·1 per cent of the circulation. Profit ranges from 10 per cent to about 5 per cent. The number of working journalists comes

to over 2,000 and the emoluments of the working journalists in the language papers vary from Rs. 50 to Rs. 350 and the emoluments in the English papers vary from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 the average being Rs. 350. Sir, these figures indicate that already there exists a degree of concentration and there is a danger of this tendency growing and the Government, if they are true to the Constitution and to the Directive Principles contained in it, should do something about it. I refer to article 39 clauses (b) and (c), which say:

"the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good;

"the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment."

Therefore, it is incumbent on the Government to devise ways and means to check this unhealthy growth of concentration in the newspaper industry and as a means of doing that, as the first step for doing that, I propose the introduction of the price-page schedule.

Let me now come to the case, or rather the cause, of the working journalists. It is true that journalists today are not the same as the working journalists of yesterday. In former years, men of the Indian Press had only one objective in view and that was the political emancipation of the country. Most of the journalists of that period were activated by fervent patriotism. They had a message to convey and a mission to fulfil. But now, alas, a newspaper is no longer run as a mission. Newspapers have become mainly commercial concerns and the working journalists are, as a matter of course, being exploited by these press barons in the same way as industrial workers are being exploited by the industrial magnates. Still, journalists occupy a very honourable

position in society; they occupy a responsible position in life and have power to do good or evil.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Two minutes more.

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE: May I have five minutes more?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have got 32 names.

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE: I was mentioning about the journalists. Even with all that, they are not paid a decent salary, they work under very bad conditions and they have no amenities. I, therefore, propose that the minimum wage should be fixed on a scale which ought to be a little higher than that suggested by the Commission and the conditions of service should be according to the demands of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists. I suggest that the scales should be Rs. 200 for class III, Rs. 250 for class II, Rs. 300 for class IB and Rs. 350 for class IA.

The price-page schedule has become a very controversial subject, controversial more so because the Government appears to be in league with the big barons of the Press. The price-page schedule, if implemented, would actually strike against the interests of the big-moneyed press. I wholeheartedly support the price-page schedule, because it will go a great way to curb the monopolistic tendencies in the Press industry; it will also help the growth of language papers and thus cater to the needs of the rural population. It will raise the standard of journalism and will act as a check to profit motive, the curse of the present-day society.

We are told that we are living in a Welfare State and that Government is proceeding towards the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society. How I wished it were so, but alas it is not so. Have the Government ever thought over it that a Welfare State and a shackled Press cannot go together? Let them make up their

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mind. here and now. Let the hon. Minister tell us that he wants to free the Press, that he wants to give the working journalists a decent living, that he wants to implement the other recommendations of the Press Commission. If he does that, if he gives that assurance in this House, and fulfils it without any delay, I think posterity will be grateful to the Minister.

श्रीमती लीलावती मुंशी (मुम्बई) : सभापति महोदय, प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट एक बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण घटना है। इस रिपोर्ट में बहुत कीमती हकीकत दी गई है और इतनी अच्छी सर्वस्पर्शी रिपोर्ट प्रकट करने के लिये हम प्रेस कमीशन की ओर जरूर कृतज्ञता प्रकट करेंगे। कल से राज्य सभा में, और इसके पहले लोक सभा में भी, इसके बारे में बहुत सी बहस होती रही है और १२० पाइंट्स में से ४, ५ पाइंट्स मात्र ले कर के बहुत से वक्ताओं ने अपना वक्तव्य दिया है। मिनिस्टर साहब ने भी इन्हीं ४, ५ चीजों के बारे में हमें अपनी राय देने को कहा है और बाकी को तो उन्होंने भी छोड़ दिया है। वे खास खास बातें हैं जैसे कि प्रेस काउंसिल गैरसरकारी होनी चाहिये, वीकिंग जर्नलिस्ट्स की तनखाह बढ़ानी चाहिये, उनको ज्यादा सुविधा देनी चाहिये, प्राइस-पेंज शेंड्यूल होना चाहिये, प्रेस बैरन्स बुरे हैं और पी० टी० आई० को सुधारना चाहिये। ये खास खास हकीकतें हैं।

बहुत सी बातें जो यहां कही गई हैं उनसे मैं सहमत हूं और मैं मानती हूं कि वीकिंग जर्नलिस्ट्स को ज्यादा से ज्यादा सुविधा होनी चाहिये और उनको अच्छी तनखाह भी मिलनी चाहिये, मगर साथ ही साथ वीकिंग जर्नलिस्ट्स के लिये कुछ धारण भी होना चाहिये। किसी किसी जगह ऐसा होता है कि जो आदमी किसी काम का न हुआ वह जर्नलिस्ट बन गया। न उसके पास शिक्षण है, न कोई खास दृष्टि है और वह अपनी दृष्टि के अनुसार गती बुरी रिपोर्टिंग करता है। वह जिसको

चाहे अच्छा कहे और जिसको चाहे बुरा कहे। तो ऐसे भी जर्नलिस्ट होते हैं और जर्नलिस्ट्स में हर प्रकार के आदमी होते हैं। तो उनके लिये भी एक धोरण निश्चित करना चाहिये। यह जमाना न्यूज पेपर का है और जो कुछ चीज इसमें छपती है उसको सारी जनता बाबा वाक्य के माफिक मानती है। उसमें जो भली बुरी चीजें आती हैं उनका बड़ा प्रभाव पड़ता है। तो, जैसा कि मैंने कहा, जो रिपोर्टिंग करने वाले आदमी हैं उनके लिये कुछ शिक्षा का धोरण और कुछ चारित्र्य का धोरण भी होना चाहिये। कमीशन की रिपोर्ट में भी बताया गया है कि जर्नलिज्म में जाने वालों के लिये खास शिक्षा और खास क्वालिफिकेशन होनी चाहिये। तो यह कोई मेरी बात नहीं है, उसमें भी यह बात बताई गई है।

प्राइस-पेंज शेंड्यूल के बारे में जो कहा गया है वह भी मुझे मान्य है। मगर यहां प्राइस पेंज शेंड्यूल की जो वकालत की जाती है वह बड़े पेपर्स को तोड़ने की दृष्टि से की जाती है न कि उनका सुधार करने की दृष्टि से की जाती है। सब छोटे पेपर अच्छे नहीं हैं और सब बड़े पेपर बुरे नहीं हैं। मेरा तो कहना है कि अगर हम कोर्ट दरबार की घटना, अपहरण की घटना, मारा मारी आदि की घटना काट दें तो इससे जनता का उपकार ही होगा और वह अच्छा ही होगा। सिनेमा के भड़कीले चित्रों से जो पूरे पन्ने भर दते हैं उनको भी अगर काट दें तो अच्छा ही होगा और बहुत सा स्पेंस बच जायेगा। मगर बहुत से पेपर्स ज्यादा पन्ने में खास ज्ञान की बातें भी दते हैं। स्त्रियों के लिये, बच्चों के लिये, दुनिया की नई खोज के लिये बातें होती हैं। वे दश प्रदश की खास खास बातों के लिये खास पन्ने रखते हैं उनको मत काटिये, यह मेरा कहना है। इस को आप जनता की दृष्टि से देखिये। हर आदमी पुस्तक नहीं खरीद सकता है और जो १०० रु० तनखाह पाने वाला आदमी है वह तो मुश्किल से एक पेपर खरीदता है और उसी से उसके घर में उसकी बीबी, उसके बच्चे

सब के लिये कुछ न कुछ ज्ञान की बात आती है। तो प्राइस-पेंज शोइयल करने से एक आने के पेपर का उसको दो आना देना पड़ेगा। एक सौ रुपये कमाने वाले आदमी के लिये दो रुपया ज्यादा निकल जाना, यह उसके लिए बड़ी बात है। श्री माधव मंनन ने भी इस बात पर जो जोर दिया है और यही बात उन्होंने रखी है।

**डा० बी० वी० कैसकर :** क्या मैं कह सकता हूँ कि प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट में कहीं ऐसा नहीं लिखा है कि दो आने का पेपर होना चाहिये।

**श्रीमती लीलावती मुंशी :** यह लिखा है कि अमुक पेंज पर इतना हो। मैं एक बात कह रही हूँ कि जो कहते हैं कि ज्यादा पेंज देते हैं.....

**डा० बी० वी० कैसकर :** यह कोई जरूरी नहीं है कि वह दो आना ही रखा जाय। वह एक आना भी रखा जा सकता है। क्या रखा जाय, यह तो अभी तय नहीं हुआ है।

**श्रीमती लीलावती मुंशी :** प्राइस पेंज के माने जो मैं समझी हूँ वह यह है कि अमुक एक पेंज का एक पैसे हो.....

**डा० बी० वी० कैसकर :** एक पैसे में चार पेंज भी हो सकते हैं, यह भी है।

**श्रीमती लीलावती मुंशी :** मैं जो बात बतला रही हूँ वह यह है कि जो पेपर बड़े बड़े पेंज देते हैं, बहुत से पेंज देते हैं, वह नहीं देना चाहिये और सब को एक ही कदम में रखना चाहिये, ऐसा कहने वाले लोग हैं। इसके बारे में मेरा कहना है, जैसे कि मैंने पहले भी कहा, कि आज बहुत सी बातें जो कि जरूरी हैं वे पेंस में नहीं आती हैं और इधर उधर की बातें आ जाती हैं, जैसे कि कोई किसी की पत्नी को भगा ले गया, किसी ने खून कर दिया, किसी ने डकैती की। तो उन सब चीजों को पत्रों से निकाल दिया जाय और उसकी जगह अच्छी ज्ञान की बातें

रखी जायें तो उसका अच्छा प्रभाव होगा। जो बहुत कुछ सिनेमा के बारे में दे रहे हैं, उन सब को निकालिये और जो अच्छी चीजें हैं, स्त्रियों के लिये, बच्चों के लिये, ज्ञान के लिये, विज्ञान के लिये, ऐसी चीजों को मत काटिए।

यहां जिन भाई बहिनों ने भाषण किये, उन में से अधिकतर का प्रेस के साथ किसी न किसी प्रकार से सम्बन्ध है। जिनको बड़े प्रेस के कारण नुकसान पहुंचा है वे मानते हैं कि जब तक बड़े पेपर्स हैं तब तक छोटे पेपर्स का विकास ठीक तरह से नहीं हो सकता है। जाँ हों, ये सब एक रंगीन चरम से देखी हुई बातें हैं। हम जानते हैं कि जब तक आजादी की लड़ाई चली तब तक, छोटे या बड़े, सब प्रेसों में एक प्रकार का जोश था। अपने दर्श के लिए लड़ने की ओर उसे स्वतंत्रता दिलाने की तमन्ना थी। आज प्रेस में व्यापारिक व्यक्ति आ गए हैं। और साथ साथ अपना प्रभाव बढ़ाने की वृत्ति। मैं तो बहुत से छोटे मोटे पेपर्स देखती हूँ क्योंकि मेरे घर में ऐसे पेपर्स का एक ढेर लगता है बहुत से पेपर तो ऐसे होते हैं जिनका न अपना कोई ध्येय है, न विशेषता है, जो थोड़े दिन चलते हैं फिर बंद हो जाते हैं। मैं कहती हूँ कि न्यूज पेपर दुनिया की आरसी हैं। जब तक दुनिया में मनुष्य मनुष्य में असमानता है तब तक न्यूजपेपर्स में भी असमानता तो रहने वाली है। एक आदमी जिसके पास दिमाग है, कुछ कहने की ताकत है, जिसके पास कुछ साधन भी हैं उसका मुकाबला दूसरा आदमी जिसके पास वे चीजें नहीं हैं, नहीं कर सकता। सरकारी जाहर खबर मिलने से भी नहीं कर सकता। एक बाजू हम कहते हैं कि न्यूज पेपर पर कोई सरकारी प्रभाव हमें नहीं चाहिये, और दूसरी बाजू हम सरकारी जाहर खबरों को लेने के लिए सरकार के पीछे पीछे ढूँढ़ते हैं। मैं नहीं समझती हमारी बातें किस तरह से मेल खाती हैं। मैं यह मानती हूँ कि सरकार का कितना ही बड़ा बजट क्यों न हो लेकिन वह

[श्रीमती लीलावती मुंशी]

सब अखबारों को जाहिर खबर नहीं दे सकती हैं।

येलां जर्नीलिज्म के बारे में भी यहां कुछ कहा गया। मुझे मालूम है कि किन्हीं किन्हीं व्यक्तियों से और स्त्रियों से भी कहा जाता है कि इतना पैसा दे दो, नहीं तो हम तुम्हारे बारे में आर्टिकल दे देंगे। बहुत से लोग घबड़ा कर पैसा दे देते हैं। यह कोई छिपी बात नहीं है, सब लोग जानते हैं। जो लोग पैसा नहीं देते उनके बारे में आर्टिकल निकाल देते हैं। उनके सामने लड़ने की किसी को सामर्थ्य नहीं क्योंकि उसमें वक्त और पैसा दोनों की बरबादी होती है। वर्षों तक कंस चलता रहता है और नतीजा कुछ नहीं। बहुत करने पर थोड़ी सी मुआफी दे दी जाती है। जो कोई आदमी जवाब देना चाहते हैं उसका जबाब छपता नहीं। छपता है तो जाहिर खबर के हिसाब से दाम लिया जाता है। मैं आशा करती हूं कि इस येलां जर्नीलिज्म के ऊपर भी राज्य सभा के सदस्य कुछ न कुछ सुझाव देंगे। क्योंकि एकतरफा बात करने से किसी प्रकार का नतीजा नहीं निकलता है। दोनों प्रकार की बात आपका बतानी चाहिए।

कमीशन की रिपोर्ट में इस विषय पर बहुत सी बातें कही गई हैं, और उन्होंने कहा है कि अच्छे कपड़े में काजल लगने से थोड़ा दाग जरूर रह जाता है। जिस आदमी के बारे में येलां जर्नीलिज्म किया जाता है उससे दूसरों के दिल में यह शंका तो जरूर रह जाती है कि उसमें कुछ न कुछ बात जरूर होगी, नहीं तो पत्र में वह बात कैसे निकलती। इस रीति से उस आदमी का बहुत नुकसान होता है।

आजकल छोट-छोट पत्र भी बहुत निकलते हैं जिनका कोई खास मिशन नहीं होता। पैसा कमाने की दृष्टि से उनको निकाला जाता है।

किसी मिशन की दृष्टि से वे निकलते हैं, यह मानने के लिए मैं तैयार नहीं हूं।

PROF. G. RANGA: Which daily paper has got a mission now?

श्रीमती लीलावती मुंशी : किसी का नहीं है। वैसे तो किसी न किसी का कोई मिशन रहता होगा, लेकिन ज्यादातर तो ऐसे हैं जिनका उद्देश्य धंधा चलाना होता है.....

काजी करीमुद्दीन (मध्य प्रदेश): उनका मिशन पैसा कमाना है।

श्रीमती लीलावती मुंशी : वह तो जरूरी बात है, नहीं तो खाना कहां से खायेंगे। उनका धंधा यही है। थोड़े दिन चलने के बाद वे बंद हो जाते हैं। न्यूजपेपरमें के लिए सब को सहानुभूति होती है, खासकर हम सब पोलिटिशियंस को उनसे सहानुभूति जरूर होती है। हमारी स्पीचें जब अखबारों में रिपोर्ट नहीं होती हैं तो हम बहुत दुखी हो जाते हैं। यहां जो शिकायत की गई उससे मैं सहमत नहीं हूं कि मंत्रियों की स्पीचें को ज्यादा स्थान और महत्त्व दिया जाता है; क्योंकि मैं समझती हूं कि उनकी कही हुई बातों का किसी न किसी तरह नतीजा होता है। कल आपको परसेंटेंज बताया गया, मगर यह चित्र हर जगह है। हमारे यहां तो फ्री प्रेस बहुत ज्यादा है। रशिया में कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी के अलावा और दूसरी पार्टियों की खबरों को कितना छपा जाता है यह मैं नहीं कह सकती, लेकिन अगर हम दूसरे देशों की ओर देखें तो मैं नहीं समझती कि दूसरी पार्टियों के आदमियों को भी इतनी प्रोमिनेंस दी जाती होगी जितनी कि हमारे देश में दी जाती है। इंग्लैंड में कंजरवेटिव पार्टी के पेंपर्स अपनी ही विचारधारा प्रगट करेंगे। आप यहां के पेंपर्स लें। चाहे कम्युनिस्ट हो, चाहे जनसंघ, वे अपनी ही पार्टी की खबरें छापते हैं। एक पार्टी वाले में भी अपने अपने निजी पेंपर्स होते हैं। मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि हिन्दुस्तान में जितना अपोजिशन पार्टी के लोगों की



कही हुई बातों को महत्व दिया जाता है उतना किसी अन्य दश में नहीं दिया जाता है। (समय की घंटी) कल रायल कमीशन की रिपोर्ट के बारे में कई लोगों ने कहा। वहाँ के एक न्यूज पेपर मंगनेट ने कहा "we all fac every body" बास तोर पर अपना प्रभाव दिखाने के लिये उन्होंने यह बात कही। मैं मानती हूँ कि फॉरैन प्रेस का महत्व जरूर यहाँ कम होना चाहिए।

कल हमारे पोस्ट भाई बनारसीदास जी ने धमकी देते हुए कहा, हमारे यहाँ १५००, १६०० के करीब वीकेंग जर्नलिस्ट्स हैं। सब बिगड़ आचेंगे। लेकिन धमकी देने की बात पैदा नहीं होती क्योंकि सरकार भी जर्नलिस्ट्स का भला चाहती है, मगर उनके जैसे शान्त आदमी जब कुछ कहें तो विचार करने की बात जरूर है। उनकी यह बात स्पष्ट है कि सरकार की धीमी गति उनको पसन्द नहीं है।

मैं यह भी मानती हूँ कि प्रेस को स्वतंत्र होना चाहिए, सरकारी न होना चाहिए। दूसरे दशों में सरकारी पार्टी के पत्र होते हैं, लेकिन मगर यहाँ सरकारी पार्टी का कोई पत्र नहीं है। हाँ, कांग्रेस विचारधारा को मानने वाले बहुत से पत्र हैं। हमारे दश की आजादी जिस पार्टी ने हासिल की और दश के सारे पेपर्स जिस के साथ रहकर लड़े, यह स्वाभाविक है कि उसकी विचारधारा पेपर्स ज्यादा पसन्द करते हैं। मगर ऐसे भी पत्र हैं, जो नहीं पसंद करते हैं। जो निर्भयता से अपने विचारों को प्रकट करते हैं। कितने ही दश हैं जहाँ ऐसे प्रेस या प्रेस वाले टिक नहीं सकते हैं लेकिन वे यहाँ मजबूत से रहते हैं। यह इस बात का सबूत है कि हमारे दश में प्रेस को कितनी स्वतंत्रता है।

महोदय, मैं आपसे एक बात और कहना चाहती हूँ। रिपोर्ट में एक बात कही गई है कि एडिटर को निकालने पर ६ महीने की तनखाह दी जाय और दूसरों के लिए ४ महीने,

या ३ महीने की तनखाह दी जाय। मगर थोड़े बड़े पेपर्स को छोड़ कर कितने ही पेपर्स ऐसे हैं जिनकी इतनी गुंजायश नहीं होती कि ६ महीने का पे निकालते समय दें सकें। अगर एक आदमी को निकालने के बाद उसको ६ महीने आप प्रेस में रहने देंगे तो वह बहुत कुछ नुकसान भी कर सकता है। जब कोई प्रेस ऐसा है जो एक महीने की भी तनखाह नहीं दे सकता, तो वह कहाँ से और कैसे ६ महीने की तनखाह देगा। आप उस चीज को जब तक सब धंधों में लागू न करें तब तक खाली न्यूज पेपर के धंधे में लागू नहीं कर सकते।

इसके अलावा एक ताज्जुब की बात यह है कि प्रेस दूसरे धंधों में लगे हुए लोगों की पगार बढ़ाने की सिफारिश तो करते हैं। स्ट्राइक की भी सिफारिश करते हैं। मगर जब रिपोर्टर्स का प्रश्न आता है, तो न पगार बढ़ाना चाहते हैं, न स्ट्राइक पसंद करते हैं। क्योंकि अपने घर में कुछ उपद्रव नहीं करना चाहते। मैं मानती हूँ कि प्रेस को अपने सभी कर्मचारियों के लिए कुछ न कुछ करना चाहिए।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is time, Madam.

श्रीमती लीलावती मुंशी: रिपोर्ट इतनी अच्छी विधि से लिखी गई है कि मैं उसका समर्थन करती हूँ और आशा करती हूँ कि सरकार पीसमील, टुकड़ों में, इसकी सिफारिशों को कार्यान्वित नहीं करेगी और सारी स्कीम का निरीक्षण करके अपना सुभाव रखेगी। सरकार जानना चाहती है कि इस पर मेम्बर्स की क्या राय है। दूसरी राय हो ही क्या सकती है सिवाय इसके कि वे सभी वीकेंग जर्नलिस्ट्स का भला चाहते हैं। सब मेम्बर्स उनको फेर डील देना चाहते हैं। लेकिन सब मेम्बर्स यह भी चाहते हैं कि हमारे प्रेस का ज्यादा विकास हो, दश का भला करने में वह ज्यादा हिस्सा ले और फॉरैन प्रेस का मुकाबला करे।

1 P.M.

**SHRI H. C. MATHUR (Rajasthan):** Mr. Deputy Chairman, we have before us a very comprehensive Report. It has been stated that the Press Commission was face to face with a stupendous and a very delicate task which they have performed in a manner that reflects great credit to the Commission. This comprehensive Report which is in our hands has made a number of recommendations of which four or five have been of great importance and on which we have concentrated our attention. **These recommendations to which we are making a reference are all so inter-linked with each other that it would not be possible for any speaker to take one particular item and talk about it.** In the limited time we have got in our hands, it would not be possible to do justice to this Report which has been in our hands for such a long time. We have been given so much material and it has been discussed at such length outside this House that it becomes absolutely necessary for us to give some proper consideration to the Report. I will take the first item—the price-page schedule. It is one of the most important recommendations of the Press Commission and it has been referred to by many Members in such a passing manner that the hon. Minister had to interfere or intervene more than two or three times as if the Members speaking on this price-page schedule have not caught the correct idea of the recommendation. Sir, if I understand the recommendation correctly, I think the price-page schedule would mean the maximum number of pages that could be sold for a fixed price.

**DR. B. V. KESKAR:** For a particular price.

**SHRI H. C. MATHUR:** For a particular fixed price you specify the minimum number of pages that must be offered for sale, the minimum news and editorial matter which must be offered. That is the proposition in the main. When our friends said that this price page schedule is a controversial subject. I was not very

much able to appreciate the argument. Sir, it has unfortunately been made controversial unnecessarily by certain interested quarters. Sir, I read a very illuminating article on price-page schedule in "The Hindustan Times" the other day and arguments have been pressed into service with such ingenuity that one is led to believe that if this recommendation is accepted, it will be only at the cost of the reading public. It is the reading public which is going to lose in kind, if not in cash, because much less readable material is going to be placed in the hands of the reading public and the bigger newspapers are not going to lose anything. But unfortunately the fact is that it is only the bigger newspapers that have opposed it and have created such a bogey out of it that even some of us have come to believe that the price-page schedule is a very controversial sort of recommendation and that it is not so much in the interests of the consumers. Sir, if we analyse this recommendation properly and if we analyse it in its application to the reading public as well as to the smaller newspapers, we will find that the reading public does not stand to lose very much because what we are cutting out is not the reading material. What we are cutting out is the unnecessary material which the bigger newspapers, that are unfortunately at the present moment in the hands of vested interests, want to dole out to the public. That is the thing which goes against the bigger newspapers. We want objective news, news for which we have some value and which we want to read. We do not want those things which we are going to cut down—the supplements which are placed in our hands every week with our newspapers. What are these supplements? They are nothing but a disguised form of advertisement for a particular industry. So it is not the reading public which is going to lose but it is definitely the smaller newspapers who will be able to gain much. The reading public, I repeat, is not going to suffer in any manner. I would, therefore, very

strongly submit and suggest that this recommendation should be accepted. I have not got much time; otherwise I would have given you a number of examples of how the smaller newspapers have suffered and how they have been driven out of the field of journalism. But I think it is not necessary for me to go into these details and give you illustrations. When we accept this price-page schedule, it necessarily follows that the smaller newspapers will have to be helped with many other facilities. For instance, it will not be possible for them to import newsprint for themselves. That is why I think the Commission has gone a little further and recommended that the Government should take over the trading of newsprint. Even if the Government does not find itself at present in a position to take over the entire trading of newsprint, I would certainly suggest that they should take the first step and that first step is that they should import some newsprint at least and make it available to the smaller newspapers at a reasonable price, at a price at which the bigger newspapers are able to get it.

Sir, as I read the speech of the hon. Minister which he delivered in the other House, I felt a little embarrassed. I must confess it because we have no reason to believe why the hon. Minister, in whom we have got a lot of confidence, should not be able to give effect to some of the most healthy recommendations of the Press Commission. I find, Sir, that his views in respect of at least two or three of the most important recommendations have been clouded considerably. While talking about concentration, he said that at present in this country there is no concentration. Of course, he admitted that the monopolistic tendency was there.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: If the hon. Member quotes me, he should quote me correctly. I did not give my own opinion. I gave the opinion of the Commission; I did nothing more. In fact, I have not had that much time

to study the subject as the Commission had.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR: It is here with me. Exactly what the hon. Minister said in the other House I will read out for his benefit and let him contradict.

AN HON. MEMBER: You cannot do it.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR: What he said, I am reading out.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU: It is contrary to Parliamentary practice to quote from the speech of anybody during the Session in which the speech has been made.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no need.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR: I do not want to go against any healthy Parliamentary convention. But I would rather request the hon. Minister to refresh his memory by reading his speech himself. He will find out that he has stated that there are these monopolistic tendencies and that the Commission has also recommended certain preventive measures to stop them and he has further said that the monopoly here in this country is not such as it is in other countries. Well, I am not going to quote those facts and figures which have already been quoted by a number of speakers to show that it is not only the monopoly, but the actual state of affairs in this country is much worse than in most of the countries with which we can compare our Press. I am not going to compare the Press of this country with certain unknown countries, which command little respect. Where we have some freedom of the Press—if we compare our Press with that of those countries, we will certainly find that the concentration of papers in particular hands is very much in this country. I would not mind if the concentration of papers was in certain patriotic hands, but unfortunately the position is not such. He himself has admitted that. Sir, the papers have passed from that stage of patriotism. Now it is the business

[Shri H. C. Mathur.] spirit that rules in the newspapers. I do not have any quarrel with it. But we have now entered a very different phase in the development of our Press which comes about because of certain circumstances. I have no quarrel with that. Then, it becomes all the more necessary for us to accept some of these recommendations which go to make a healthy press.

I was further surprised when, in the other House, he mentioned about the minimum wages. I do not know how this bogey has been raised that by accepting this recommendation, there would be trouble and so many papers would go out. Unfortunately, what is happening? We know that the journalists are to-day not in a position to get the necessary terms and conditions by a collective bargaining. Therefore, it would be a very healthy thing if we enforce it.

It has been pointed out by a learned speaker that the P.T.I. has improved its relationship with its workers. Well, it was the pressure of Government that forced them to do that. If the anticipated action of the Government had not been there, things would certainly have continued as they had continued and as they had been there all this time. They have just made some improvements because of all these indirect pressures—I am not sure if it was with any change of heart—and even then, I do not know whether we can depend upon that change of heart.

We must have an organization which is essentially sound and if recommendations have been made to see that we have a sound organization, then those recommendations must be given proper weight. I quite realise that it is not for the Minister to disband the P.T.I.

Mr. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Nothing more.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR: Two or three minutes. I will finish in three minutes. I know that the hon. Minister has absolutely such power in his

hands—indirect power that he can wield influence to see that we make healthy changes.

I would like to inform the hon. Minister that only last week one of the employees of the U.P.I., who had been there as an apprentice for 2 years or more, has been shut out, and has been given notice all of a sudden. These are the conditions which prevail even to-day and there is no gainsaying that fact. So, it is absolutely necessary that we take immediate steps through statutory legislation to give to the journalists what we consider their minimum wage and other terms and conditions of service and try to break this monopoly and bring up the small newspapers because a healthy Press is an essential characteristic of democracy and as we develop, it is all the more necessary that we should take immediate and necessary steps to this end. I shall not touch on other points.

श्री रामधारी सिंह विनकर (बिहार): उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, पूर्व इसके कि मुझे जो कुछ कहना है वह मैं कहूँ, मैं एक बात की ओर आपका ध्यान आकृष्ट करता हूँ, और वह बात यह है कि पी० टी० आई० के पक्ष में, जो कई बातें यहां कही गयी हैं, मैं उन्हें मानने का आधार नहीं पाता। एक माननीय सदस्य ने यह कह कर पी० टी० आई० का पिष्टपेषण किया है कि उसके हिसाब में जो गड़बड़ियां पायी गयीं वे राइटर की विरासत की गड़बड़ियां थीं। लेकिन सभा बाहर पत्रों में जो विवाद चल रहा है उसे देखते हुये हम इस बात को मानने में असमर्थ हैं।

कुछ और भी बातें हैं जिन को दृष्टिगत रखते हुए पी० टी० आई० में किसी प्रकार के पुनःसंघटन की आवश्यकता उचित प्रतीत होती है। उदाहरण के लिये पी० टी० आई० की सर्विस का दिल्ली में मूल्य एक हजार रुपया है, जयपुर में १५ सौ रुपया और

कोयम्बतूर में १७ सौ रुपया। तो जाहिर है कि इतनी मंहगी में छोट अखबार नहीं चल सकते। इस लिये प्रेस कमीशन ने पी० टी० आई० के सम्बन्ध में जो सुझाव दिया है वह एसा नहीं है कि एक दो सदस्यों के कुछ कहने से वह उड़ा दिया जाय। उस पर विचार करना होगा।

श्रीमन्, प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट और उस ले सुझाव से जो तस्वीर मेरे सामने आती है वह भिन्न प्रकार की है। सामान्यतः लोग इस विवाद को बड़े पत्रों और छोटे पत्रों का विवाद समझ रहे हैं। लेकिन मुख्यतः यह भारत की भारतीय भाषाओं के पत्रों और अंग्रेजी के पत्रों का विवाद है क्योंकि इस देश के अंग्रेजी के पत्र अच्छी स्थिति में हैं और देशी भाषाओं के पत्र मर जा रहे हैं। प्रेस की समस्या, भारतवर्ष के सामने उसके अखबारों की समस्या मुझे मुख्यतः तीन रूपों में दिखलाई पड़ती है। सब से बड़ी समस्या यह है कि हमारा देश में जितने अखबार निकलते हैं उनकी कुल प्रतियों की आधे से अधिक प्रतियाँ शहरों में खप जाती हैं। दहात में अखबार नहीं पहुँच पाते और भारत को यदि शीघ्रता से प्रगति करनी है तो दहात में भी समाचार पत्र जानें चाहियें। और दहात में जानें वाले समाचार पत्र अंग्रेजी के नहीं होंगे, क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं के होंगे, भारत की अपनी भाषाओं के पत्र होंगे।

दूसरी समस्या यह है कि अखबारी उद्योग पर कुछ थोड़े से लोगों का प्रभुत्व हो गया है और इस प्रभुत्व को बिना तोड़ आप देश में वह स्थिति उत्पन्न नहीं कर सकते जिसमें जनता के अपने पत्र जनता के विचार को लेकर जनता के सम्मुख पहुँचें।

अखबारों की एक और समस्या बड़ी ही कठिन है जिसका जिक्र कई सदस्यों ने किया है और वह है अखबारवासीयों की रोटटी की समस्या। कितने आश्चर्य की बात

है कि हमारा देश में सिर्फ तीन हजार श्रमजीवी पत्रकार हैं, लेकिन उनको भी हम अच्छी स्थिति में नहीं रख पा रहे हैं। पत्रकारों की आर्थिक स्थिति का वर्णन नहीं किया जा सकता। हनुमान ने सीता के बार में राम से जो कहा था, देशी भाषाओं के पत्रकारों के विषय में मैं भी उसी को दुहराना चाहता हूँ—

सीता के अति विपीत बिसाला  
बिना कहइ भल दीन दयाला।

विचित्र बात है कि पत्रकार दिन रात परिश्रम करते हैं लेकिन फट हाल रहते हैं; कभी भी जीवन में भर पेट खा नहीं सकते; अच्छे घर में रह नहीं सकते और मरने के समय उनको कोई आशा नहीं दिखलाई देती। अपने बाल बच्चों को भगवान के भरोसे छोड़ कर वे दुनिया से चुपचुप प्रस्थान कर जाते हैं। भूखों तो दूसरे लोग भी मरते हैं। मैं मानता हूँ कि वकील भी भूखों मर सकता है, बैरिस्टर भी भूखों मर सकता है और बैंकर ग्राजुएट भी भूखों मर सकता है। लेकिन उनके भूखों मरने में और पत्रकार के भूखों मरने में कुछ भेद है। ये लोग भूखों तब मरते हैं जब उन्हें काम नहीं मिलता है और पत्रकार भूखों तब भी मरता है जब वह दिन रात परिश्रम करता है। यह एक ऐसी स्थिति है जिस को भगवान देखें तो देख सकते हैं, हम लोगों से यह देखी नहीं जाती।

ये तीनों समस्याएँ असल में एक ही समस्या के विभिन्न रूप हैं और मेरा खयाल है कि कमीशन ने जो सुझाव रखे हैं, जो समाधान निकाला है, उनसे सभी समस्याओं का समाधान निकलने वाला है। किन्तु, कमीशन की सिफारिशों में दो सिफारिशों को मैं सब से अधिक महत्व देता हूँ। एक है पृष्ठीय मूल्य की सिफारिश और दूसरी है विज्ञापन के सम्यक वितरण की सिफारिश। कुंजरू साहब ने आज जो यह बात कही कि ये दोनों काम कर देने से ही छोड़ पत्र बच

[श्री रामधारी सिंह दिनकर]

नहीं जायेंगे वह बात बहुत दूर तक सच है। मैं भी यह मानता हूँ कि पृष्ठीय मूल्य निर्धारित कर देने से अथवा विज्ञापन के सम्यक वितरण की व्यवस्था कर देने से ही सभी पत्र नहीं बच जायेंगे। लेकिन ये दो बातें कर दी जायें तो छोटे पत्रों के अस्तित्व के पक्ष में बहुत बड़ी दलील निकल आयेगी और छोटे पत्रों का भीवष्य अधिक टिकाऊ हो जायेगा। यह सच है कि पत्रों की सफलता सम्पादन की योग्यता और प्रबन्ध की कुशलता पर निर्भर करती है, लेकिन इसके भी बहुत से दृष्टांत मिले हैं कि अच्छे सम्पादक और अच्छे प्रबन्धक मिले, और कुछ दिन उन्होंने काम भी किया, लेकिन आखिर को वे हार मान गए। और सिर्फ इसलिये हार मान गये कि पत्रकारों की दुनिया में जो प्रतियोगिता फैली हुई है उसमें वे डट नहीं रह सकते थे। पत्रकारों के संसार में जो प्रतियोगिता चल रही है वह न्यायपूर्ण नहीं है। होता यह है कि जिनके पास अधिक पैसा है वे अखबारी कागज दूसरे दर्शा से सीधे मंगा लेते हैं और वह उनको सस्ता पड़ता है। यही कागज हमारे छोटे पत्रों को देने और ड्यूटी मूल्य पर मिलता है।

डा० बी० बी० कंसकर : इससे भी ज्यादा पर।

श्री रामधारी सिंह दिनकर : हां, इससे भी कहीं कहीं ज्यादा ही पड़ जाता होगा।

यह भी है कि विज्ञापनों की जो असली फसल होती है वह तो बड़े अखबार ही काट लेते हैं और खेत में जो खूँटी बचती है उस को चर चरा कर छोटे अखबारों को जीना पड़ता है। और जैसे दूध के बिना बच्चे नहीं जी पाते, वैसे ही छोटे पत्र अकाल काल कबीलत हो जाते हैं। जब से सप्लीमेंट की प्रथा चली है तब से तो और भी हालत खराब हो गई है। विज्ञापनदाता के यहां विज्ञापनों के लिये तो बजट बना रहता है। उसमें से जो मोटी

रकम है वह तो सप्लीमेंट वाले ले लेते हैं, इसके बाद भी जो छोटी सी रकम बच जाती है उसमें से भी शेर का हिस्सा लेने के लिये बड़े अखबार वाले पहुँच जाते हैं। और इसके बाद जो बचता है, वह छोटे पत्रों को जाता है। मुझे एक और विचित्रता दिखलाई पड़ती है, वह यह कि भारतवर्ष के पत्रों में राष्ट्रीय और स्थानीय विज्ञापन का कोई भेद नहीं किया जाता। पटना में कलकत्ते के अखबार बहुत बिकते हैं और कलकत्ते के अखबारों में कलकत्ते के सिनेमाघरों के विज्ञापन छपे रहते हैं। लेकिन, पटना में हम उनको पढ़ कर करें? इसलिये कोई ऐसी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिये कि जो राष्ट्रीय धरातल के विज्ञापन हैं वे तो बड़े अखबारों को मिलें लेकिन स्थानीय विज्ञापन सदैव स्थानीय पत्रों को मिला करें।

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA (Uttar Pradesh): That is, they should be localised?

श्री रामधारी सिंह दिनकर : एक बात मुझे और कहनी है। जितने बड़े अखबार हैं वे या तो बड़े उद्योगपतियों के हैं या उन लोगों के हैं जो कि उद्योगपति वर्ग के हैं। अतएव, विज्ञापन के लिये जो भाग दाँड़ मचती है उसमें इन लोगों को आसानी से सभी विज्ञापन मिल जाते हैं और नतीजा यह होता है कि जो मोटा है वह दिनों दिन मोटा होता जा रहा है और जो दुबला है वह दिनों दिन दुबला होता चला जा रहा है। समाज के अन्य क्षेत्रों में भी विषमताएं हैं और मैं मानता हूँ कि समाज में सर्वत्र बड़ी मछलियां छोटी मछलियों को खा रही हैं। लेकिन यह इंतजारी कि जब और सारी दूसरी मछलियों को ऐसा करने से रोकेंगे, तब ही अखबारी तालाब में जो बड़ी मछलियां हैं उनको भी रोकेंगे, यह गलत बात है; क्योंकि अगर अखबारी तालाब की छोटी मछलियों को अभी बचाया गया तो वे समाज के अन्य तालाबों की छोटी मछलियों को बचाने में सहायता ही करने वाली हैं, इसलिये यह बहुत ही

आवश्यक है कि इनकी रक्षा तुरन्त की जाय ।

सच पूछिये तो दृशीय भाषाओं के पत्रों के उद्धार को, अथवा छोट पत्रों के उद्धार को, मैं सर्वोदय का कार्य मानता हूँ । गांधी जी ने जिस समाज की कल्पना की थी वह समाज ऐसा नहीं होगा जिसमें कि २, ४ या १०, २० आदिमियों का अधिकारों पर प्रभुत्व होगा बल्कि उन अधिकारों पर सारी जनता का प्रभुत्व होगा । अधिकारों का केंद्रित हो जाना खतरा की निशानी है और अगर सरकार अभी इस खतरा को नहीं देख रही है तो इसका अर्थ यह नहीं है कि यह सिद्धांत गलत है, बल्कि यह कि जिस समाजवाद की ओर सरकार जाना चाहती है उसकी ओर उसकी प्रगति अभी तेज नहीं हुई है । ज्यों ज्यों यह प्रगति तेज होगी त्यों त्यों पत्रों के एकाधिपत्य का खतरा उसे अधिक भांगना पड़ेगा । मैं कहूंगा कि खतरा की प्रवृत्ति अभी से दिखलाई पड़ रही है । चूंकि गोबध आन्दोलन को प्रश्रय देने से जवाहरलाल की सरकार कमजोर की जा सकती है इसीलिये बड़े बड़े अखबार खुल कर उस आन्दोलन को प्रश्रय देते हैं । चूंकि प्रतिक्रियावादी सन्तों और महन्तों को जनता के सामने रखने से सरकार की प्रगतिशील शक्तियाँ पर लगाम लगती हैं इसीलिये ऐसे लोगों को खुल कर पब्लिसिटी दी जाती है और उनके चित्रों को, उनके व्यक्तित्व को आकर्षक बना कर रखा जाता है । बजट के समय जब सरकार कर लगाने का प्रस्ताव लाती है या राष्ट्रीयकरण का प्रस्ताव लाती है, तब बम्बई से बंगाल तक सिर्फ एक ही तरह की चर्चा छिड़ जाती है, माना धनियों का जो हित है, उसी में देश का हित होने वाला है । केवल १५ आदिमी मिल कर देश के अखबारी जनमत के आधे से अधिक का नियंत्रण करें, इसको मैं बड़ा भारी खतरा मानता हूँ । खतरा की स्थिति उत्पन्न हो गई है और इसको दूर करना चाहिये । भारत सिर्फ १०, २० आदिमियों के साथ नहीं है और न १०, २०

आदिमी भारत का प्रतिनिधित्व कर सकते हैं । अगर इस देश में प्रजा सत्ता को पूर्ण रूप से विकसित होना है, तो जनता के एक एक खंड को अपनी आवाज उठाने का मौका मिलना चाहिये । भारत की आत्मा व्याकुल हो रही है । उसको अभिव्यक्ति के लिये हर एक जिले में एक माध्यम मिलना चाहिये और यह काम बड़े पत्रों को सीमा में रख कर ही किया जा सकता है । छोट पत्रों के उत्थान को मैं आदि से अन्त तक गांधी-धर्म मानता हूँ और मैं समझता हूँ कि गांधी-धर्म पर आरुढ़ होने में सरकार को शर्म नहीं होनी चाहिये ।

मुझे एक बात और कहनी है । यह जो पृष्ठीय मूल्य निर्धारण की अथवा विज्ञापन के सम्यक वितरण की व्यवस्था है, उसके होने से बड़े अखबारों को कोई नुकसान नहीं होने वाला है । आज स्थिति क्या है ? अंगूजी के अखबार हमारे घरों में आते हैं परन्तु शुरू से आखिर तक उनको उलट जाइये, कहीं भी ठहरने को जी नहीं चाहता । उनमें पढ़ने के लिये रहता ही क्या है कि जहां ठहर कर हम पढ़ें ? विदेशी न्यूज एजेंसियों से उनका सम्बन्ध है; दूसरी सीरिसों से उनका सम्बन्ध है । वहां से पकी पकाई सामग्री आ गई और उसी को छाप कर मेरे घर में फेंक दिया । यदि उनके पृष्ठ घट जायें तो उसमें रंज करने की, द्वाँभ करने की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं । भारतवर्ष में पत्रों के सम्पादन विभाग में काम करने वाले वे अभाग हैं, जिन्होंने कि अपने माथे पर जीवन का अभिशाप लिया है । क्या इतना काम कोई कर सकता है, यह सांचने की बात है । एक, एक आदिमी के ऊपर यह भार है कि ५, ५, ६, ६, कालम या इससे भी ज्यादा कालम लिख कर दो । अगर इन लोगों का संख्या विषयक परिश्रम बच जाय और गुण की तरफ इनकी शक्ति को लगाया जाय, तो मेरा खयाल है कि बड़े अखबार सुन्दर हो जायेंगे, स्वस्थ हो जायेंगे ।

[श्री रामधारी सिंह दिनकर]

उनके प्रत्येक पृष्ठ पठनीय हो जायेंगे और अच्छी सामग्रीयों से वे पूर्ण हो जायेंगे।

रह गया यह कि सरकार को इस बात में हिचकिचाहट नहीं करनी चाहिए। अभी तो विवाद का जोर हुआ है। मैं समझता हूँ कि इस सभा में ऐसी कोई गंदी बात नहीं कही गई है, लेकिन कुछ गालियाँ बड़े अखबारों को दी जा रही हैं। यहां भी एक भाई ने गाली दी है। यह सब गलत बातें हैं। बड़े अखबार से आप चिढ़ते हैं कि वह धनी का अखबार है। तो हम और भी कार्य कर रहे हैं जिनसे धनियों को बाधा पहुंचती है। भारत-वर्ष में समाजवाद की प्रतिक्रिया, दमन की प्रतिक्रिया नहीं है। वह दूसरों को अपने साथ लेकर सद्भाव से आगे बढ़ने की प्रतिक्रिया है। और मेरा खयाल है कि सरकार अपना संकल्प स्थिर करेगी तो बड़े अखबार वाले उस में बाधा डालने वाले नहीं हैं। न वे चुनाव में आपका विरोध करेंगे और न आप को किसी संकट में डालेंगे।

एक छोटी सी बात और है जिसका उल्लेख कर के मैं अपना स्थान गृहण कर लूंगा। प्रेस कमीशन के खिलाफ जिन्हें और कोई दलील नहीं सूझती, वे कहते हैं कि यह प्रेस की आजादी पर संकट आ रहा है; प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता पर संकट आ रहा है। मुझे पता नहीं लगता कि ये बोलने वाले लोग कौन होते हैं। जो लोग अखबारों में काम कर रहे हैं, जिनका ईमान उनकी कलम की नोक पर है, जिनका हृदय रोज दिन सम्वादों और लेखों में उतरता है, जो भगवान के सामने अपने साहस, अपनी ईमानदारी और निर्भयता का सबूत देने वाले हैं, वे तो कहते हैं हमारी आजादी पर कोई बन्धन लगाओ, और दूसरे जो दूर से तमाशा देखने वाले लोग हैं, वे कहते हैं कि प्रेस की आजादी खतरा में है। अगर प्रेस कमीशन के सुझाव से प्रेस की आजादी खतरा में होती तो प्रेस के श्रमजीवी पत्रकार इस आजादी के लिए ज्यादा लड़ते।

लेकिन कोई इसको नहीं सोचता कि जो सुझाव दिये गए हैं उनको लागू किया जाय। यहां स्वतंत्रता हम उसको देना चाहेंगे जो गान्धीवादी होते हुए शोषण के समर्थन में लिखता है; स्वतंत्रता हम उसको देना चाहते हैं जो समाजवादी विचारधारा का होते हुए पूंजीवाद का समर्थन लिख रहा है; अपनी आत्मा को मार कर लिख रहा है; जिसको हकमी नाच यानी कमांड परफार्मेंस कहना चाहिए। आज आजादी देकर, उन लोगों के आत्मा की रक्षा करनी है; उन लोगों की अभिव्यक्ति की शुद्धि करनी है, जो १९ वीं सदी की स्वतंत्रता की कल्पना में फंसे हुए हैं और "आजादी खतरा में है, आजादी खतरा में है" दूहाई दे रहे हैं। उनके साथ, मैं समझता हूँ, मेरा मत कभी मिल ही नहीं सकता।

PROF. G. RANGA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I find myself in agreement with most of the points made by my hon. friend Mr. Mathur and also the famous poet who has just now preceded me. Two things will have to be kept before ourselves, in our attention, when we consider the recommendations of the Press Commission. One is what measures can be taken in order to help the general reading public in our country and see that as many papers as possible are enabled to reach them and also at prices which would be within their reach and at the same time carry such quality of stuff which would be useful to them, which would be informative, instructive and even uplifting and inspiring.

The second consideration that we should place before ourselves is that the press should be enabled to be really free, and flowing from it is also another consideration as to what sort of press service we should be having in our country—whether they have sufficient strength, internal, financial, inspirational and informative. If we keep these things in our mind and then address ourselves to those various points which the hon. Minister has very advisedly asked us to concentrate our attention



upon, then I don't think it would be very difficult for us really to find ourselves in agreement with the recommendations of the Commission. That is why I wish to say in the very beginning that I am in favour of the acceptance by the House of the amendment tabled by Mr. Govinda Reddy.

Let us take first of all the price-page schedule. I think Dr. Kunzru said all that ought to be said about it in such a brief and effective manner. We ought to be in favour of it. At the same time, I don't think that that alone is going to solve the problem of the poorer papers and the language papers especially. Therefore I think there is a very strong case indeed for the Government to formulate special measures in order to see that these papers are given additional help and assistance, so that they can place themselves before the public at prices and also with such number of pages that it would do real service to the general public in our country.

Why should these rich papers, big papers, be opposed to this price-page schedule? They themselves were in favour of it at one time. They were not willing that the Government should give it up when the Government thought of giving it up and now why should they be so very keen about it? If they are really so very keen about serving the general public—and the reading public is growing every day—and if they are not afraid of the competition from a large number of new, young and weaker newspapers that are coming into existence, they need not really be opposed to this. Therefore, I sincerely hope that the Government would exercise sufficient strength—moral and material—in order to be able to decide upon the acceptance of the recommendation and also to impose it. Secondly there is the other question of Press Council. One of our friends was very eloquent about the need for freedom of the Press. We are all in favour of it. Almost all of us had been fighters in fact for the freedom of the Press.

Dr. Kunzru and some others said that it is a very technical matter—this journalism—but surely, he should have known and we all know that almost all of us had our own innings as journalists at some stage or other in our own careers. We had gone through that gamut in those days when we were fighting for our national freedom. Therefore, I don't think that the Commission has done anything wrong in suggesting the kind of personnel that it has suggested for the formation of the Press Council. Secondly why should not the Government be brought in? Whose Government, is it? I can understand my friends from the Opposition taking some objection to Government, because the Government of the day happens to be at the head of a political party, but even then, it is a democratically elected Government. If we are not prepared to give so much power to the Government, then we have Parliament in regard to the Press Council. Let us suggest that Parliament should have its own representatives on the Press Council, but nevertheless, there must be a Press Council.

I was rather surprised that Mrs. Alva, who made such an eloquent speech yesterday and a very good speech indeed, somehow made the mistake of suggesting that it should not be a statutory body. A statutory body does not mean that it should indeed be a Government agency but it would have statutory authority and status. It would have a definitely laid-down function and it would be a good thing to have a statutory body like that. I hope, the Government would also accept that recommendation of the Commission. Then, why should there not be a High Court judge presiding over it? It would give added strength. If, on the other hand, it were to be found later on, after having, for one or two terms, tried this experiment suggested by the Press Commission, that it might be better to have a non-official, we can think of it later on.....

DR. B. V. KESKAR: A High Court Judge is not an official.

PROF. G. RANGA: In fact it was suggested for that very purpose. He would be able to bring to bear his judicial outlook in settling these small matters.

The next point is this. Is the press really free in our country? Everybody—almost everyone who has spoken in this House and in the other House—has admitted the fact that it is not free. We want the press to become free. Are we in a position really to free our press from the incubus and stranglehold that it is suffering from today? What is the position today in our country? There are a few—I need not mention the names of the papers—whose editors or proprietors were really genuine press people. They built up their papers and they are today very powerful—they are all a credit not only to themselves but also to our country. But in the case of various others, people have made money in various industries and they have found that they must have public relations. And they have paid and are paying also a number of Public Relations Officers in this city. They are keeping up very costly establishments. But the most powerful and most useful means of public relations for them has come to be this press itself. Therefore, they have come to own a number of daily papers, and weekly papers and monthly papers. They are introducing every new mechanism of making them more and more popular and these are the people who are having a stranglehold over our papers. What can we do to get rid of that? But we can at least weaken their stranglehold and this Press Council will go a long way indeed in helping the public, as against these people and their stranglehold. Why do they publish these supplements? So many of our friends have given explanations. I agree with them, but the additional explanation is that they want to spread around among the public a conception of the national service that they are render-

ing by their hold over certain industries. This is a very queer thing.

One of my friends was saying, "Let us also be considerate about the feelings or the pockets of our consumers." A lot of rich people are sending round to people, to Members of Parliament, very costly advertisement stuff; representations that are very costly, beautifully produced on beautiful paper with beautiful pictures and so on. Sir, do we want such papers to be placed in the hands of the public? Surely it is not the business of this Parliament or of the Government to help these big people, these big newspapers, to place these things before the general public, at almost no price whatsoever, in order to help their industry and to meet their own advertisement needs and all the rest of it. Therefore, Sir, a minimum price has got to be fixed and there is no harm at all in expecting our readers to pay for that.

One hon. friend wondered whether there is any "yellow press" at all in our country. I would ask, are we blind to the existence of this yellow press in the country? Would it not be indulging in yellow press if, instead of having a political programme; if instead of having a party programme, or anything of that kind; they begin to talk about a man and a woman as to whether they are married or not, whether they are going to have a child or not, whether they went to any hospital or whether they are having some other child somewhere else and all that, and thus spread social refuse in our country? Therefore, I do feel Sir, that it was right for the Press Commission to have asked the Government to arm themselves with the necessary legislation.

Next, I come to the question of news services. Here I wish to pay my tribute to the U.P.I., for the way it has served the country for so long a time, during all those years when we were fighting against the British, against great odds. At the same time, unfortunately for it, this Press, it seems to me, has come into trouble.

Now it is for the Government to make up its mind and also for the press in our country to make up its mind whether we can afford to have two news services. If we cannot afford to have two, then we must find ways and means by which we can help the United Press of India to amalgamate itself with the P.T.I. or both of them to merge themselves into one news service, whatever it is.

Then I come to the Press Trust of India. Sir, it is wrong to say that the P.T.I. is only eight years old. We should remember that it has inherited the traditions of the past, good and bad, of the A.P.I. And all these years that it has been functioning, it has also rendered a lot of service, although not as much as the U.P.I. had done when we were not free. But I submit that the P.T.I. needs encouragement and assistance. Why? Not because it is owned by some of the press lords, but because we need a news service, and, to our misfortune, the Government has not paid as much attention to this question as it should have, in order to help our country to have a really first-class news service. The A.P.A. wanted to have its service here; the U.P.A. wanted to have its service here. There was also "The Globe", another news agency in this country, and if it had not been for some decision taken by the Government at one stage, they would have monopolised our news agencies. But how could these agencies develop themselves to such a strong and powerful position? So also is the case of the Reuter, how could it grow so strong? It is all because the governments helped them. But what is it that our Government is doing in order to strengthen our news services? It is here that I want the Government really to consider this matter very seriously. I want them to consider it for this reason also that we are now undertaking more and more responsibilities abroad, political, economic and social. Therefore, would it not be in our interests, national as well as international, especially in the interest of the new foreign policy

that we are pursuing all these years, of non-alignment and peace-front and so on, that we should have our own news agencies here and elsewhere, send out these representatives, post them in various parts of the world, to be the sources of reliable information, information that would be of interest and also useful from India's point of view and from the point of view of our foreign policy? Would it not be in our own national interest to have them, instead of ourselves depending on foreign correspondents and foreign columnists for whatever news that we may want from abroad? Would it not be better to depend on our own people, to supply news to our newspapers so that our general public may come to be properly enlightened?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Only two minutes more.

PROF. G. RANGA: And that is the direction in which I want Government to think about this question. At the same time, Sir, I am in favour of the Press Trust of India or whatever news agency the Government may decide upon, or the U.P.I. and the P.T.I. together should become a corporation or a council, whatever you may call it. It is wrong for people to say that only those people who are interested in the concern, or who have put in their shares in it, should have control of it. Is not the Government a consumer of the P.T.I. and also of the U.P.I. news, through the Information and Broadcasting Department and through their various other departments? Is not Parliament also interested in it? If, on the other hand, it were to be said that Government should not be put in direct control of the P.T.I. or any other agency, because there are opposition papers also and opposition parties also and they are likely to be stifled, then I would ask, would it not stand to reason that Parliament should be provided representation on whatever corporation that may be brought into existence so that the Opposition also may have a representation there? Therefore, there is a strong case for a reorganisation of the news services.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Dr. Mookerji.

PROF. G. RANGA: Please let me conclude. I have only to touch on one more point and that is about the working journalists. I am in favour of fixing a minimum remuneration and in the case of those papers which would not be in a position to pay that much and would, therefore, have to close down, I would give the liberty to the journalists as well as the management to come to an agreement between themselves so that they could settle what wages should be paid to them, quite apart from the minimum, in the hope that in one or two years' time, they may be able to work themselves up to the national minimum that may be fixed.

DR. RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI (Nominated): Sir, the Report of the Press Commission has naturally covered a very wide ground and has discussed the problems of the Press in all their bearings and implications. I personally feel that these problems are best judged in the light of the historical and social background so that we may be able to decide on the lines on which some of these problems may be solved.

First of all, I think we should have a clear idea as to the facts of the situation of the Indian Press. Out of a total of 330 dailies now in existence, 29 are controlled by five owners, covering 31.2 per cent of the total circulation of newspapers, while about 50 per cent of the circulation is commanded by 54 newspapers controlled by 15 owners. There is thus already established a considerable degree of concentration and monopoly in the industry. But we must recognise that this tendency towards concentration is not the outcome of any kind of capitalistic manoeuvre or design. Rather it is, I think, the inevitable consequence of the economic conditions and financial difficulties which in the early stages of the development of the Press in India could not be surmounted by mere floatation of a public company. Perhaps the growth of this

monopolistic trend may call for some checks. The extent of this monopoly may be understood further from the fact that the aforesaid 5 and 15 owners of newspapers between them control not only a high percentage of the total circulation but also the management and the operation of every part of that vast and complex newspaper industry.

They have a position of monopoly, for instance, in regard to newsprint, advertisements, financial resources, banking facilities, and the resultant freedom from social insecurity. A tragic feature of this situation is that along with the bigger newspapers with expanding circulation, there are numbers of small newspapers which are unable to survive this struggle for existence between the large industry and the small industry. The administration of the large industry no doubt calls for urgent reforms and these reforms should be carried out with reference to the following defects, namely, (i) the great disparity in the emoluments between the proprietorial structure and the rest of the structure or the difference between different categories of employees; (ii) the absence of just and reasonable conditions of service in the majority of the newspapers; (iii) the absence of well considered scales of pay and prospects and (iv) the absence of leave rules and other amenities of public service. To save the small newspaper industry, perhaps the remedy that may be applied may be the application of a liberal principle in regard to advertisement allocation, though advertisement must ultimately again be deemed to be dependent on the circulation or intrinsic merit and efficiency of the newspaper concerned.

There is in the country another class of newspapers which may be called the nationalist newspapers which struggled very hard against the repressive press laws under the British Government. They are to be treated as belonging to a special category and deserving of concessions needed for their rehabilitation. We should not also make too much of the

supposed differences and conflicts between the proprietors of newspapers and their employees. We must take, into account the inherent risks of the newspaper industry to which the Government has so far given little help. The industry cannot easily obtain loans from banks or even from the Industrial Finance Corporation. Out of a total of more than 300 newspapers existing in the country, not more than half a dozen are running at a profit. They do not get advertisements from the State industries of the country while foreign advertisements are on the wane in the wake of import controls. The industry thus calls for sympathetic treatment.

The conditions of the working journalists leave room for improvement. The management of some newspapers is rather top-heavy. Again, it is not quite certain whether the Industrial Disputes Act should be made applicable to the working journalists in their own interests. I do not think they will gain very much by coming under professional trade unions and the consequent influence of political parties. Perhaps the remedy is to allow the right of collective bargaining to the organisations of professional journalists which may not be registered as trade unions under the Industrial Disputes Act.

My next point is that the obligations under the Industrial Disputes Act in respect of minimum wage and other privileges such as leave rules, Sunday rest, gratuity and the like as recommended by the Press Commission are beyond the means of many newspapers and may cause their closure. It is strange that the Press Commission does not mind this consequence. It had even stated that newspapers that cannot go on under ordinary conditions might go. The more prosperous newspapers can give effect to all these recommendations by virtue of their own resources. In the best interests of the newspapers themselves and from the public point of view, such matters may be left to individual newspapers for effecting mutual

adjustments and accommodation. The recommendation of the Press Commission in regard to the application of the Employees' Provident Fund Act to the working journalists is not financially feasible for a number of newspapers, which may have to close down.

The proposed Press Council should not have, within its purview, the relations and disputes between the employees and the employers; these may be left to the administration itself. The proposal of the Press Commission for the establishment of State trading corporations to deal with the purchase and distribution of newsprint is open to some objections. The newspapers are not economically capable of subsidising the newsprint industry in the country; the cost of the system in the shape of storage, distribution, wastage and the like would be too heavy for most of the newspapers who should retain their individual right to decide what and wherefrom to purchase newsprint. State enterprise is not preferable to private enterprise in this particular field.

The views of the Press Commission on the working of the Press Trust of India are somewhat misleading. No convincing case, in my opinion, has been made out for replacing the Press Trust of India, a co-operative non-profit-making concern, by a public corporation which will not be able to achieve the degree of success achieved by the P.T.I. Again while it is already widely known that the U.P.I. has done very good public service which is recognised to be of national importance, this agency is financially not very prosperous. It has behind it a long story of trouble and sacrifice for the national cause and it has been built up against all odds in the good old days. It has now to resort to borrowing to make both ends meet; it appears that the accumulated loss today is estimated at Rs 8 lakhs and the annual recurring loss is at the rate of one lakh of rupees. I plead for sympathy on the part of Government for this truly nationalist venture by

[Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.] coming to its aid and helping it to wipe off its debts and also to reduce the charges for teleprinting equipment; this agency should also have restored to it the right of supplying commercial news.

As I said earlier, the points dealt with by the Press Commission are too many and it is difficult to deal with them all within the limits of the time at my disposal.

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON (Bihar): Mr. Deputy Chair, we are all interested in the Press Commission's Report because we are connected or have some dealings with the Press either directly or indirectly. Sir, the newspapers serve not one but many purposes.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. C. MATHUR) in the chair]

Recently we were told that one of the means by which news agents enticed the prospective clients was by telling them that newspapers have waste paper value. Thus, the price-page schedule will be objected to not only by the news barons but also by the grocer and the other persons who may eke out a small living by selling newspaper which is waste paper. It is because of this attitude that we find that our approach to this problem is full of prejudices. We have pre-  
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judices against the proprietors; we have prejudices against the news agencies; we have certainly prejudices against the so called press barons, the jute king, the cotton king and other kings who make the newspaper the medium for their corrupt propaganda.

Sir, another reason also why we are against these institutions is that they stand to us as symbols of social injustice, injustice against the people who work for them, the people who are the prop and lifeline of the newspaper enterprise, namely, the working journalists.

Sir, much has been said here about the Royal Commission's Report and comparison was even made about the

get up of the two reports by Mrs. Violet Alva, forgetting for the moment that these two reports are different in size, different in contents, and naturally we cannot have a report of that size bound in the same way as the Royal Commission's Report. I wish Mrs. A'va had also thought about our P.A.C. Reports which are agreeable to handle although the contents are not so agreeable.

Sir, before I proceed, I would like to make a special mention about Dr. Keskar's contribution to the appointment of this Press Commission. Much has been said about the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, but I would like to draw the attention of the House.....

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): Now you should judge him by the acceptance of the recommendations of this Commission.

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: I want you to know how much he is responsible for it personally. I would like to read out with your permission a small paragraph of an article that he wrote in 1947, long before he ever thought of becoming a Minister:

"It is time that an enquiry commission is appointed to look into the financial sources of Indian newspapers and their means of income. Recently the British Parliament took such a step to make sure that no undue monetary or financial influence is being exercised on newspapers. It is even more necessary in this country to have such a commission. The Indian Press is in a most lamentable condition and an enquiry is sure to reveal remarkable facts about the income sources of various journals and their methods. It will lead to a healthier and better press. We will have to launch a fight for the newspaper underdog; otherwise he will soon be crushed out of existence."

Sir, I am sure Mr. Gupta and many others are carried away by their prejudices. But when we are discussing such an important thing as the Press Commission's Report, we should not

allow ourselves to be carried away by our feelings and prejudices, but pay a little more attention to the facts behind those things. Sir, the purpose of a free Press is regarded as the moral enfranchisement of the people, contributing to fresh interests in public affairs and fresh attachment to the country's institutions. Judged from this stand point, we find that the Press in India does not fulfil the real purpose for which a free Press is intended.

Speakers before me have already pointed out how the Press is not fulfilling its function either as a purveyor of news or as an agency for stabilising our administration or imparting information to our people. Sir, Mrs. Alva in this connection referred to our erstwhile colleague and a distinguished journalist, Mr. K. Rama Rao. Sir, I would also like to mention another name, his disciple Mr. Chalapathi Rau. Sir, these two men have carried on a tradition which no other contemporary has done. They have shown how journalists of integrity can fight authorities and be of real service to the public as well as to the working journalists by convincing themselves and the world that there is a principle to live by and a purpose to achieve by being an honest journalist. Sir, they have shown that money cannot buy them; that money cannot tame them; that they will undergo any hardship and suffer any penalty as were the pioneers in the history of journalism and they stood for the cause of honest journalism. Sir, it is this spirit which, I think, is permeating even the younger journalists who are having to undergo all sorts of humiliation from their bosses in the office, who are facing all sorts of hardships because of the insecurity of tenure, but who are doing their work with great devotion and zeal in spite of these difficulties.

Sir, we hear in this House Members often speak of missionary zeal. Everybody, especially people who are comfortably placed, always ask other people who are not so comfortably

placed to work with missionary zeal. Have those Members ever considered what a missionary gets or how his zeal is produced? Sir, a missionary in this country, as far as I know, is materially looked after. He has no worry except his work. And what is the condition of our journalists? I have first-hand knowledge of the journalists. There is first of all insecurity of tenure. They do not know from day to day what is going to happen to them and secondly there are all the other humiliations that even a well-placed paper subjects its employees to in their career. And thirdly, Sir, once they are sent out, there is no opportunity whatever to get into another paper except on the same terms which are also humiliating. Well, Sir, these people are contributing to maintain the integrity of our Press and produce what is vaguely called 'the freedom of the Press'.

Sir, we also talk of journalistic ethics. There is also an international code of ethics for journalists and we want a code of ethics for journalists here. Now this always reminds me of the story of a soldier in the American Civil War who was drunk. He was brought before General Sherman and the General reprimanded him for drunkenness and this man with amazing calmness said: Sir, you cannot have all the cardinal virtues for 15 dollars a month. Now you cannot produce zeal; you cannot produce ethics; you cannot produce integrity if a man is condemned to hunger, insecurity and lack of even living conditions. So let us not talk of ethics; let us not talk of zeal, much less missionary zeal. before we guarantee to the journalists as to other workers the basic minimum without which a person cannot live in dignity or in comfort in our society.

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA (Mysore): That is meant for the proprietors mainly.

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: Why proprietors or journalists? It is meant for the whole world.

[Shrimati Lakshmi Menon.]

Now, Sir, I want to tell you, especially in the case of news agencies, there is an utter lack of ethics because I have my own personal experience of how they suppress news and how they do not publish a contradiction when contradiction is necessary, and I do not want to trouble this House with personal anecdotes about my encounters with news agencies. That is neither here nor there.

**SHRI GOPIKRISHNA VIJAIVAR-GIYA** (Madhya Bharat): The proprietors ought to be ethical.

**SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON**: Why they alone? Even the Members of Parliament should have a code of ethics because it is absolutely necessary in order to build up a proper democracy; everybody must have some principles and ethics to guide them.

Sir, now I come to continue this idea of journalistic ethics and yellow Press. Yesterday, we heard about the yellow Press and the pink Press. Why should we not also have a black Press and brown Press and grey Press?

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA**: And the white Press.

**SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON**: And the white, of course, there is. It is grey. We cannot have yellow with white.

Now what do we find? We are all against control, but why? It is because certain vested interests have the control of the Press, there is no freedom of Press as such. Now what really happens? No voice has been raised in this House during the debate either yesterday or to-day about the kind of stuff that is being produced to develop what I have already mentioned "fresh interests in the institutions of the country". We are a Socialistic State; we are at least striving towards that pattern. We claim that we are a progressive country. All of us here have sworn by the Constitution. We have sworn allegiance to our Constitution which enshrines very

great and noble principles and yet what is the kind of Press that we have? Just as we, who owe allegiance to the Constitution, do not abide by it, we have also a Press which does not abide by the purpose and the principles of democracy which this country is supposed to have. Sir, we talk of horror comics; we talk of indecent literature; we talk of Mandrake and Superman stories. But have we ever thought of near-indecent obscene marriage advertisements that are published not by the yellow Press but by papers of such standing as "The Hindustan Times" and "The Hindu". There are many papers which indulge in such advertisements. Where is the dignity of the Indian citizen?

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA**: And after marriage pictures in the "Illustrate Weekly".

**SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON**: Yes; certainly.

Now, I come to the last point, namely, the working journalists. I have some difficulty in understanding the adjective 'working'. Are there journalists who do not work also? I do not know. Just like 'constructive workers' this 'working journalists' seems rather funny to me. Anyway, I presume that a working journalist means a journalist who is denied justice, who is made to work day and night in an industry which is unregulated, in an industry where no security of any kind is guaranteed. I am all for the working journalist because he fulfils a great need in society and it is necessary for a free Press to see that the working journalists are kept healthy, contented and happy. Sir, unless the prop and lifeline of the journalistic world are kept clean and healthy, we cannot have an ideal news agency or the correct kind of journalism. At this point, I would like to remind the House about the very alarming reports that appear from time to time in the newspapers of how language newspapers under-financed and under-staffed are bought up by



foreign agencies for their propaganda. It does not happen in the big cities but it happens in the small districts and this, Sir, is a very very dangerous thing. When France fell before the advance of the Nazi forces, it collapsed physically and it was a matter of wonder to the students of history how a country which had fought its enemies so many times could have collapsed so soon. We were told later that France collapsed in the early thirties when the French newspapers were bought up by foreign agencies or subsidised by industrialists who owed little loyalty or consideration for their country. Sir, we are a young democracy and we want to build it up on strong and sure foundations. If we do not encourage the smaller language papers, there is this great danger of corruption at the source, I mean, at the village and district level and if, God forbid, the country were to be threatened from any quarter, you will find that the morale of the country will be undermined and we will also fall in the same way as France fell. Therefore, I do not care whether the Press is a trade or an enterprise or a service, because none of these excludes the need for immediate legislation to improve the conditions of its workers, especially the working journalists.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar): Mr. Vice-Chairman, the Press Commission's Report is a very very valuable document and I must congratulate the members of the Commission for the comprehensive survey that they have made of the state of the Press in India today. Sir, the most striking thing about our Press today, as has been pointed out by the Commission itself, is firstly the **fall** in the standards of journalism and the second is the monopolistic tendencies that have developed in our Press.

Sir, speaking about the fall in the standards of our journalism, the Commission has pointed out:

"Formerly, most of the Indian Press had only one objective and that was political emancipation of

the country. Most of the journalists of that era were actuated by fervent patriotism and a feeling that they had a mission to perform and a message to convey. Political independence having been achieved, the emphasis has shifted, and the newspapers are no longer run as a mission, but have become mainly commercial ventures."

Sir, you will find that today the Press is a commercialised institution and it is primarily run now on account of profit motives. It is worth while to examine whether it is not rather ridiculous to ask the working journalists in this background to work as missionaries and not to care for their own self. It is also rather incongruous that the Society or the State should not come in to protect their interests. Sir, in every industry we find that protection is afforded to the sweated labour and it is in the fitness of things that in this industry also adequate protection should be given to the exploited working journalists. It is not clear from the statements made in Parliament and in the Press from time to time by the hon. Minister what he has decided about this very important question of legislation on the minimum wage for the journalists. This is the most important legislation that has got to come out from the recommendations of the Press Commission. The Press Commission says:

"The wages and conditions of service of journalists should be such as to attract talent. In view of the influential position that a journalist occupies, it is essential that there should be a certain minimum wage paid to him. If a newspaper cannot afford to pay a minimum wage to the employee which will enable him to live decently and with dignity, the newspaper has no business to exist. A large scale unemployment, as a result of this, is not anticipated."

Therefore, if we want to raise the standard of our journalism, if we want to raise the ethics of our journalism,

[Shri Rajendra Pratap Sinha.]

it is but imperative that we must guarantee a minimum wage and an adequate wage for the journalists. This will also attract very good talent to the journalistic profession and thereby increase the standard of journalism. That is why, I submit, the Government should take immediate steps to implement this recommendation of the Commission. The Commission has rightly pointed out that if a paper has no capacity to pay its journalists, it has no right to exist and in the Commission's anticipation, there will be no large-scale unemployment on account of the enforcement of the minimum wage legislation.

I come to the question of monopolistic tendencies that we find in our Press today. There has been a great centralization of ownership in a few hands and it is pointed out by the Press Commission that out of a total of 330 dailies, five owners almost control 29 papers and 31.2 per cent of circulation and 15 owners, 54 newspapers and 50.1 per cent of the circulation. "Therefore, there can be no denying the 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." Sir, unless there is a check, there is a high degree of concentration in every business. You will find that the concentration of ownership in India is the highest in the world. Not only that, there has been a very unhealthy interlocking of the newspaper industry with the banking, insurance and other industrial undertakings. A few people who have got an interest in other industries also control this industry. This restricts, to a very great extent, any flow of ideas and I should say that these few people in this country control the entire thought of the country. This is a very dangerous tendency. I

think that early steps should be taken to break this monopoly that is growing in this country. Unless we do so, we cannot permit the growth of the language papers.

The Commission has also pointed out that we should have price-page schedule introduced into the newspaper industry. This will also help us to have more and more of language papers in the districts. What is happening to-day is this that the rural news and the rural activities do not receive enough attention from these newspapers of the State Capitals or metropolitan towns. It is very imperative, in the interests of the development of public co-operation and for developing the country from the bottom, that the rural side should be given enough publicity and the ideas and thoughts should go to the countryside. This can only happen if we develop a language paper in every district of the country. This can only happen if we break this monopoly and introduce the system of price-page schedule.

I come to the question of advertisements. Big business people like mill-owners also control the newspaper interests. Therefore, they manage to get the bulk of the advertisements from their own industrial undertakings for these big papers and nothing is left for the small papers. There should be some control, as has been suggested by the Press Commission, on the allocation of advertisements. Then only we can permit the smaller papers—the language papers—to grow and thrive.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. C. MATHUR): Time is over.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: Just one point more, Sir. Therefore, I would suggest early legislation for the implementation of the price-page schedule and for the proper distribution of advertisements.

One further point about the Press Council I want to say. Legislation should be brought forward immediately to bring into existence the Press

Council. I find that a large number of working journalists and all the language papers—the small papers—have welcomed it and only the monopolistic papers—the chain papers—have not welcomed this idea. I do not, however, agree in regard to the composition of the Press Council and I think that the working journalists and people who are in the profession should control and manage the Press Council as is done in the United Kingdom Press Council. I am not very happy with the idea of bringing in our judiciary like that and we should keep our judiciary away from all these things; otherwise, what would happen is that the prestige and impartiality of the judiciary will greatly suffer. Therefore, I would not suggest that the Chairman of the Press Council should be a High Court Judge or that the name of the Chief Justice of India should be dragged in in connection with the Press Council.

SHRI MAHESH SARAN (Bihar): Sir, everyone has welcomed the Press Commission's Report and rightly so and those who have gone through it or those who have gone through a part of it find that all aspects of the question have been thoroughly discussed and proper attention is paid even to the details. I have heard the speeches of other hon. Members and I feel that all the points have been covered. But still, I wish to bring a few points to the notice of this House and the Minister here.

What I feel is that the recommendation regarding the minimum wages of journalists is not enough. I feel that their wages should be certainly more than what is suggested as their minimum wage. You should make the journalist free from all anxiety. You should make him capable of doing things care-free and this is only possible when this anxiety—financial anxiety—is not there. Therefore, if you want good work, if you want a real lead to the country and efficiency, then it is necessary that we should give proper consideration to this aspect of the question. There-

fore, I shall once more appeal to the Minister that the minimum wages should certainly be more than what is suggested in the Report.

At the present moment, we find that papers are started not with any high motives. Before independence we found that people who had love of the country and who wanted to propagate certain ideals among people, sat down together, formed a company and started a paper, a paper with certain ideals. Now it has become a money-making machine. People start paper because they want to increase their capital. It has therefore, gone into the hands of the capitalists and we find that a few people combine together and monopolise the papers. We have already heard that out of 330 dailies, five owners control 29 and fifteen owners control 54. What do these people do? Have they improved the lot of the journalists? Certainly not. They turn their employees away when they like without giving them notice, without giving them even their adequate pay. These people, when they earn more, try to start other concerns because it pays them well. They care more for advertisements; they care more for sensational news, because they want that the papers should be sold and that they should get more profit. Therefore, this tendency has to be checked and checked at a very early date.

The other point, so far as India is concerned, is that, if you want to propagate certain principles, if you want that the people should know the details of what is being done in the country, that they should co-operate in the activities of the Government, then it is necessary that they should know of it, and the only way of knowing it is that they should have newspapers and those newspapers must be in the regional language. At present, the attention is more on the English papers. You find that they monopolise most of the papers. There is no system by which help is given for starting presses for newspapers in the regional languages and I feel that it is one of the most essential things

[Shri Mahesh Saran.]

to be done and that should have first attention.

There is one other point which I want to mention. This Press Council is the most important of all the suggestions made. It is really a very important point. It will raise the standard and remove all the irregularities and deficiencies. It will try to create a sort of healthy atmosphere all round and we will have less complaints than we have now.

Now, Sir, the other point which has been very strongly pressed already is the price-page schedule. I think it is a necessity. Otherwise, my own impression is that it will not be possible for the small newspaper owners to carry on. They have to pay so much more for the different materials and, therefore, it is necessary that so far as this matter is concerned, it should receive the attention of the Government.

Sir, there is only one point which I should in the end emphasise, and that is the Press Council should consist of a majority of journalists. But I think it is a very good suggestion to have a High Court Judge at the top of it; and we should have other people who have nothing to do with the Press on the Council. I consider this is one of those suggestions which are really reasonable. With these words, I wish to conclude.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL (Punjab): Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Minister for the references that he made to the late Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha, who was the Chairman of this Commission. I had the honour of working with him for a period of about two months in regard to the demands of about a quarter of a million workers over whose destinies he presided. And I entirely agree with him in what he said about this great man, who was not only a great Judge, but a great man, about whom it can be truly said that he always tempered justice with mercy. His was a human approach and hon. Members who have had the

privilege of reading this Report—I cannot say that I have read every line of it myself and I don't believe anybody else has—will bear out the fact that he had devoted his attention to this very grave problem with a great deal of humanity.

Let me, to start with, deal with three statements that have been made in regard to this matter, one by the hon. Minister, the other by my hon. friend, Mr. Mahanty, and the third by Dr. Kunzru. Mr. Mahanty's statement was to this effect. He read out a statement by Mr. Johnson of the "Statesman", and you will bear with me when I say that like a very good journalist of the modern age about whom we have heard a great deal in this Commission's Report, he has selected what has suited him and ignored what has not suited him. That is precisely what some journalists have been blamed for doing—not journalists but some newspaper proprietors have been blamed for doing.....

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Like advocates citing precedents. They don't cite all the precedents.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: But a good advocate cites adverse precedents and deals with them; he does not ignore them, as my hon. friend seems to have done. But even like the devil who was quoting the scripture, if he would only quote what Mr. Johnson himself has said,—after making adverse remarks. He said: "...they have stood out firmly against regimented news and sought to ensure the independence"—I want him to remember this word "independence"—"(including that sort of independence which comes from better remuneration) of those handling news." Now, when he was criticising the Press Commission, he did it on the basis of a proposal regarding the Press Commission.....

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Press Council.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: Press Council. He did it on the basis that the independence of the press should

not be interfered with. That is precisely what the Commission has said. It is in order to ensure the independence of the Press that they are suggesting the Press Council.

And, again, my learned friend, Dr. Kunzru—he is not here unfortunately at the present moment—went astray, completely astray, when he was criticising the composition of the Press Council, by stating that nowhere in his experience has he heard of fifty per cent of the representatives on this Press Council being non-professional men. If you look at the relevant paragraph giving the details of the Press Council, you will find that they have said this: Out of 25 members and one independent Chairman—a Judge—there should be more than 13 who are working journalists. They go beyond that. As far as the rest of them are concerned, they say that they should be drawn from certain sources and one of these sources is newspaper proprietorship. So, the 13 becomes some other figure, 13 plus 'X'. Then, they say the periodical press also ought to be represented. It becomes 13 plus 'X' plus 'Y'. And then, they say universities and literary societies ought to be represented. It may be that the literary societies are composed of people who are already journalists and there is nothing to prevent the nomination of those people who have experience of journalism. And certainly in the universities now, they have got curricula dealing with journalism. And would it be wrong for man who is teaching the profession of journalism to become a member, or to be appointed as a member of the Press Council? So far from it being that half the members of the Press Council are members of the profession, it may result in practically cent per cent representation in the Press Council of those who are connected with this profession in some manner or other.....

PROF. N. R. MALKANI (Nominated): Which also would not be satisfactory.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: Some people, of course, it is very difficult to please all the time. It is very, very difficult to please everybody. And my learned friend, for whom I have got a great deal of regard, unfortunately happens to be in that category over this particular matter. Now, I am surprised that my learned friend, Dr. Kunzru, learned as he is, got carried away by a specious argument which has no value whatsoever.

Now, Sir, I do not want this House to enter into barren controversies about the policies pursued by one lot of people or another who are connected with the Press. These are all barren controversies. It does not pay for responsible statement to deal with such matters. One can leave that sort of thing alone. For instance, questions like this—Director or Managing Director receiving a remuneration of Rs. 3,500, whereas the Editor gets a remuneration of Rs. 300; or the Chairman of the P.T.I. taking umbrage at what was said about him, or about his evidence, by two Members of Parliament. Those are very unimportant matters. What is important is this. This is a national concern, of the greatest importance to the national life of this country, namely, the Press and the source which gathers the information which is published in the Press. Not only it is of importance internally, nationally; it is of great importance internationally. Therefore, we have to see whether the sources of information are contaminated by any procedure that was adopted to set up the press or the press agencies that exist. That is a point of view which ought to be paramount in this discussion; not the point of view of various defects that there may be. Undoubtedly, in every organisation, there are defects—in the P.T.I. or the U.P.I. Defects there will be, monopoly control or no monopoly control. And that is where I come to my learned friend, the hon. Minister.

In two matters he also seems to have gone slightly wrong, slightly astray.

[Diwan Chaman Lall.]

One is about this matter of monopoly control. It is perfectly true that the Commission has not laid its finger absolutely upon the particular spot; but he will bear with me that they have given the facts and figures which show that five people control a circulation of 30·1 per cent. They control 29 daily newspapers. It also shows that 15 other people control as much as 50·1 per cent of the circulation; and I believe 54 daily newspapers. So, here we have an example of 20 people controlling 81 per cent—practically all the circulation of the dailies in this country.

Now, that is a very important fact to remember in connection with monopolist control. I remember when the first Press Commission was appointed, mine was the solitary voice. In a Minute of Dissent I drew the attention of the Government and the people of this country to the existence of monopolist control and one cannot run away from the fact that there is a tremendous tendency towards monopolist control in India. Somebody was telling me the other day that comparisons have been made with the United States. In the United States, I am told, that only 25 per cent.—not 81 per cent. of the circulation is controlled by what may be termed as monopolist control. If that is the state of affairs, here in this country, it is a serious matter to consider as to what should be done. I don't want to direct the attention of the House to the various deficiencies, defects malpractices etc. that have been pointed out by the Commission, because, I think, these are infructuous matters and nothing can be gained by going over that aspect of the subject. But the problem is this. How are we going to control the Press from falling into the hands of such people, which according to the Commission is controlled in a more or less monopolist manner, as far as the 81 per cent. of the circulation is concerned, and whose destiny is in the hands, I am told, of nine families. The major portion of the destinies of the press is

in the hands of nine families inter-linked in the matter of business, industry, banking, insurance.....

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: And believing in polygamy.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: My hon. friend is very intelligent and he is not ordinarily irrelevant, but he is completely irrelevant as far as this is concerned. Because polygamy was sanctified by the Hindu religion of which he is a shining member, unless he has discarded that religion and taken on to another. May I say this? It is a problem that we have to face. It may be, as the Commission has reported, that pressure is exercised upon this particular Press which is controlled or it may not be so. But the dangers are always there. After all, what is needed is an uncontaminated source of information. If that is the principle under which we are to be guided, then it becomes necessary to see, for my hon. friend to see, the exact manner in which in the future the Press can be worked or managed. One of the first terms of reference of the Commission was to look into the present state of the Press, the present and future lines of development and to make its recommendations. Looking into the present state of the Press, this is what is visible. What is my hon. friend going to do in order to set that matter right?

May I, with your permission, make one suggestion to him? I think what we are aiming at is—it has been repeatedly said—a Welfare State. A Welfare State cannot be run by bureaucracy. That we are quite certain about and I am quite sure that my hon. friend is certain about it. A Welfare State has got to be run by the people for whom the State is conceived. That is to say, the management of the industry has gradually to fall into the hands of those who are engaged in that industry and I submit that this is the picture that my hon. friend might easily follow in the legislation that he is about to sponsor in regard to this matter viz., that the control of the press should

gradually fall into the hands of the working journalists who are the ones who make the Press what it is and thereby avoid this terrible danger of monopoly control of information and news. If this principle is followed, inevitably another thing follows—the aspect not only of ownership but the aspect of running the industry. There it is not the owner that is concerned—we have dealt with the owner—we have got to deal with the man who is working as a working journalist in the Press. The recommendations made by the Commission are quite obvious in this respect and I do hope that my hon. friend will put them all together in regard to the betterment of that particular class of worker who is the least paid comparatively in the Press today. I am told that the average wage of a journalist in the vernacular press is about Rs. 150 per month. The average wage—salary—don't call it a wage—of a journalist in the English Press is about Rs. 350.

MAJ.-GENERAL S. S. SOKHEY (Nominated): When it is paid?

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: My hon. friend General Sokhey says, 'when it is paid.' I do hope that the instances in which it is not paid are few and far between. But it is because we want to prevent that particular state of affairs arising, that it is necessary for my hon. friend clearly and distinctly to make out a charter for the journalists which will lay down their conditions of service, the lowest remuneration that they must get, their provident fund policy and the conditions under which their services can be dispensed with and I do hope that in that charter he will also lay down internal machinery for avoiding disputes. I am not enamoured of the method that they adopt of adjudication. What is necessary is conciliation rather than adjudication.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

It is therefore necessary that there must be some machinery which can be utilized for the purpose of avoiding disputes that arise between the man-

agement and the working classes. I want to draw your attention next to the question of the P.T.I. and the U.P.I. Now the Commission has recommended that the P.T.I. should be run as a public corporation. I do hope that my hon. friend will have no hesitation in accepting that particular recommendation. It is one of the most important recommendations of the Commission. To shelve it would be wrong. I must give all praise to the P.T.I. for having taken over a tremendous burden from the old Associated Press which was in league or alliance with Reuters' Organisation. They have done a magnificent job of work and let us give them due praise for it but the times are changing. We have got to concentrate upon the advancement of our internal policies towards a Welfare State and we have to further and foster our international policy in the realm of international politics. We cannot do that. The only representative as far as I can make out—the only representative of the P.T.I. in the world today, in the foreign countries, happens to be our Prime Minister; but for the Prime Minister, the name of India would be heard very indistinctly in other countries. He it is who makes his policy statements which are broadcast throughout the world but as far as the organisation certainly is concerned, it is almost moribund—almost does not exist. My hon. friend knows that Sir Roderick Jones, who was the controller practically of Reuters and one of the founders of Reuters, said at the time of the Royal Commission that he was proud of the fact, realising the tremendous importance of a British organisation in the matter of gathering and disseminating news concerning commercial and other trade affairs, that it was a British concern. What are we proud of today? The P.T.I. has absolutely no influence whatsoever abroad and it is absolutely necessary and essential that any corporation that is set up in order to take over the task of the P.T.I. should take upon itself the burden and the duty of making India's name and India's policies known throughout the world.

[Diwan Chaman Lall]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is time.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: I am very sorry. I don't intend to take any longer but this is a matter of very great importance and therefore many of the things that I wanted to say will have to remain completely unsaid but all that I wish to say is this, that we would be lacking in our duty towards the hon. Minister who is to be congratulated on adopting this new convention of coming to the House, placing a Resolution before it and asking the House for its reactions in regard to his policy and then coming to a decision in the Cabinet regarding that policy. I wish other hon. Ministers would also adopt a similar attitude. When he is dealing with this matter in the Cabinet, I beg of him not to forget that the nation's interests are.....

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR (West Bengal): The recommendations could have been accepted earlier.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: ....paramount in regard to the dissemination of correct information about India, abroad as well as internally. So whatever is done should be done in order to strengthen these organisations which are the collectors of news, including the U.P.I., I see no reason why the hon. Minister should not turn it into a Trust as has been suggested, giving it the necessary financial assistance for the purpose, Sir, I wish him well by his programme. I shall have more to say when he comes before the House again.

बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश): श्रीमान् जी, मैं श्री सुरेन्द्र महान्ति और राघवेंद्र राय के संशोधनों का विरोध करना चाहता हूँ और साथ ही यह भी बता देना चाहता हूँ कि श्री गोविन्द रंङ्गी के संशोधन में और मेरे संशोधन में भाईचारा और सामंजस्य है। अगर माननीय मंत्री महोदय डा० कंसकर, मेरे इस संशोधन की जो असली मंशा है। उस

मूलतः स्वीकार कर लें तो मैं अपने संशोधन को वापस लेने को तैयार हूँ, या श्री गोविन्द रंङ्गी के ही संशोधन को वह स्वीकार कर लें।

मैं श्री सुरेन्द्र महान्ति और श्री राघवेंद्र के संशोधनों को प्रतिक्रियावादी मानता हूँ, प्रगति विरोधी मानता हूँ और समाज विरोधी मानता हूँ। मैं ऐसा समझता हूँ कि उन्होंने जान बूझकर इस तरह का संशोधन रखा है जिस में दर से काम हो और जिसे हाइलेटरी टॉक्टकस कहते हैं। मेरे प्रस्ताव और श्री गोविन्द रंङ्गी के प्रस्ताव में केवल इतना ही अन्तर है कि जहाँ वे कहते हैं 'generally approves the recommendations' मैं इस विश्वास पर चलता हूँ कि इस सदन का बहुमत पूर्णतया उन सब सुझावों और सिफारिशों को स्वीकार करता है जो कमीशन की रिपोर्ट में मौजूद हैं। दूसरा अंतरा यह है कि मैं चाहता हूँ कि जितनी जल्दी से यह कार्य हो उतना ही अच्छा है। गां स्ला पालिसी, धीरे धीरे काम करने की नीति जो है, जैसा कि मुझे संदेह होता है, वह न हो। मैं यह नहीं चाहता कि हमारी इस सम्बन्ध में जो कुछ भी मांगें हैं, उनको सरकार आज ही हमारी हथेली में रख दे। लेकिन साथ ही साथ मैं यह अवश्य चाहता हूँ कि सरकार जो कुछ भी इस सम्बन्ध में कार्य करे, जो कुछ भी कदम उठाये, वह जल्द से जल्द उठाये। मेरे प्रस्ताव का आशय केवल यह है कि हम जो कुछ चाहते हैं उनके सम्बन्ध में सरकार की रफ्तार तेज हो।

श्री सुरेन्द्र महान्ति : आप क्या चाहते हैं ?

बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह : हम जो कुछ चाहते हैं, उसको आप सब के साथ समझने की कोशिश कीजिये। आप में समझने की शक्ति होनी चाहिये।

श्री काजी करीमुद्दीन : जो वे चाहते हैं, आप दे नहीं सकते।

बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह : मैं क्यों जल्दी चाहता हूँ, उसकी एक मिसाल दे कर सिद्ध करता



हूँ। जून सन् १९४७ में यू० पी० सरकार ने एक न्यूजपेपर इंडस्ट्री इन्क्वायरी कमेटी बैठाई। उससे भी पहले वहाँ के श्रमजीवी पत्रकारों को कई प्रकार की शिकायतें थीं और उन्होंने चारों तरफ से आन्दोलन किया तब सरकार का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित हुआ और उसने यह इन्क्वायरी कमेटी बनाई। कमेटी ने सन् १९५० ई० में अपनी सिफारिशें सरकार के सामने रखीं। मैं सदन का समय इन सिफारिशों की तफसील बयान करने पर नष्ट नहीं करूँगा किन्तु इतना अवश्य कहना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार इन सिफारिशों की बिना पर एक कानून बनाने वाली थी। मगर इसी दीर्घायन में हमारा प्रधान मंत्री ने प्रेस कमीशन बनाने का आश्वासन दिया और एक कमीशन एपाइन्ट हुआ। इस पर वहाँ की सरकार ने यह कहा कि चीक अब सारा मामला प्रेस कमीशन के सामने पेश है, जब वह सिफारिश करेगा तब हम इस मामले में अन्तिम निर्णय करेंगे।

एक और बात यू० पी० मैं उस समय हुई। वहाँ के लीडर, अमृत बाजार पत्रिका, नेशनल हेरल्ड और पायनियर में जो श्रमजीवी पत्रकार काम करते थे, उन्होंने भी अपनी तकलीफों को सरकार के सामने रखा था। सरकार ने इस सम्बन्ध में एक एडजुडिकेटर नियुक्त कर दिया। एडजुडिकेटर ने इस सम्बन्ध में अपना कार्य आरम्भ ही किया था कि इसी दीर्घायन में प्रेस कमीशन कायम हुआ। तब उस समय यह समझा गया कि उन पत्रकारों के, जिन के साथ अन्याय हुआ है, जो दबे हुए हैं, सताये गये हैं, पीड़ित और शोषित हैं, जब प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट आयेगी तब उनके कष्ट दूर हो जायेंगे। इसी ख्याल से सरकार ने एडजुडिकेशन के मामले को वापस ले लिया। इस प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट चार साल के बाद हमारा सामने आती है। मैं चार वर्ष इसलिए कहता हूँ क्योंकि सन् १९५१ में पार्लियामेंट के सम्मुख प्रेस कमीशन की बात सामने आई थी। इतने दिनों के बाद आज वह दिन आया

कि हम प्रेस कमीशन की रिपोर्ट अपने सामने रखते हैं। आप सब लोग यह बात भली प्रकार जानते हैं कि श्रमजीवी पत्रकारों ने इस बीच प्रेस कमीशन के साथ हर तरह का सहयोग किया किन्तु पत्रकारों के प्रभुओं ने इस काम में हर कदम पर विरोध किया। सरकार से यह उम्मीद की जाती थी कि वह प्रेस कमीशन की सिफारिशों को पूर्णतः स्वीकार कर लेगी। मैं यहाँ पर साफ कर देना चाहता हूँ कि श्रमजीवी पत्रकार प्रेस कमीशन के जो सुझाव हैं, उनसे भी आगे बहुत चाहते थे। किन्तु जब उन्होंने यह देखा कि सरकार उनकी सब मांगों को स्वीकार नहीं करेगी तब उन्होंने सन्तोष के साथ इन सिफारिशों को ही स्वीकार कर लिया। इन चार वर्षों में पत्रकारों के प्रभुओं ने घी के दिये जलाये और खूब दावतें खाईं। किन्तु बेचारा श्रमजीवी पत्रकारों ने इन चार वर्षों में तरह तरह के कष्टों का सामना किया। बहुत से नौकरी से निकाले गए और दाने दाने को तरसते रहे। जब मैं यह बातें कहता हूँ तो कोई काल्पनिक बात नहीं कहता। मैं स्वयं श्रमजीवी पत्रकार रहा हूँ। मैंने हर न्यूज एजेंसी में काम किया है और हिन्दुस्तान के जितने भी बड़े अखबार हैं, करीब करीब सब में मैंने काम किया है। मैं विस्तार से इन सब बातों को कहकर सदन का समय व्यर्थ नष्ट नहीं करना चाहता। लेकिन मैं इतना अवश्य बतला देना चाहता हूँ कि श्रमजीवी पत्रकारों में आत्म सम्मान है। यद्यपि उनके पास किसी तरह की सम्पत्ति, मिलें और कारखाने नहीं हैं। न ही उनके पास दुकानें और मकान किराये पर लगाने को हैं, जिनसे वे अपनी आमदनी में वृद्धि कर सकें। अगर उनके पास कोई आमदनी का जरिया है तो वह उनकी बुद्धि और कलम की शक्ति है, जो कि उनकी जायदाद है। उन्होंने इतने वर्षों तक सब किया और अब उनसे कहा जाता है कि रीजनल वेजेज बोर्ड बनाये जायेंगे और नये सिर से जांच की जायेगी। श्री महान्ति साहब कहते हैं कि प्रेस काउंसिल के मामले को अभी स्थगित

[बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह]  
रखा जाय। प्रेस काउंसिल के कांस्टीट्यूशन के बारे में.....

3 P.M.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: The hon. Member is misrepresenting me. I have no objection to his speaking at length but he should not mis-interpret me. I was never opposed to the idea of a Press Council. If he had understood me, I opposed the formation of a Press Council on a statutory basis; with a judge as chairman.

PROF. G. RANGA: How does it work?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Do not mis-interpret me.

बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह : मैं उनके इस सुधार को स्वीकार किये लेता हूँ। लेकिन वे यह भी कहते हैं कि प्रेस-कमीशन की सिफारिशें 'relating to Press laws be referred to the Law Commission for review.' सही बात तो यह है कि ऑरिजनल शकल में उनका जो अमेंडमेंट था वह इंटायरली आऊट आफ आर्डर था। जिस शकल में वह इस समय हैं, कल जो उन्होंने जबानी संशोधन किया, उसमें ये लफ्ज जोड़ दिये "relating to Press laws".

SHRI S. MAHANTY: That was a typing mistake.

बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह : जो कुछ भी हो, मैं यह कहता हूँ कि ला कमीशन की नियुक्ति के विषय में जो टर्म्स आफ रिफरेंस हैं उस से और इस विषय में जो प्रास्पेक्टिव ला बनने वाला हैं, जिसके बारे में हम उम्मीद करते हैं कि सरकार हमारे सामने एक बिल या कई बिलें लाएगी, उससे ला कमीशन कोई वास्ता नहीं रखता और प्रेस कमीशन की जो सिफारिशें हैं, वे ला कमीशन की स्कीम में नहीं आतीं।

श्री सुरेन्द्र महान्त : आएगी, आएंगी।

बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह : मेरे पास ला कमीशन के टर्म्स आफ रिफरेंस मौजूद हैं। मैं अपने मित्र को उसमें से पढ़ कर बता देता, लेकिन मेरा वक्त निकल जायगा।

मैं यह अर्ज कर रहा हूँ कि उसका रिट्रो-स्पेक्टिव एफेक्ट इतना नहीं हो सकता है कि ला कमीशन जहां हिन्दुस्तान के और कानूनों की जांच करेगा वहां प्रेस लाज के बारे में भी जांच करेगा।

श्री सुरेन्द्र महान्त : ठीक है।

बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह : और आपका वह पर्यञ्च स्वतः सिद्ध हो जाएगा। जो आगे के सरकार के डीसिज़ंस होंगे और कानून बनेंगे वे उस के अधिकार के क्षेत्र के बाहर हैं।

जिस प्रकार ५० पी० में हुआ, उसी प्रकार से मध्य प्रदेश में भी एक जांच समिति नियुक्त की गई। उसने जो सिफारिशें कीं वे भी अभी कार्यान्वित नहीं हुईं। द्रावन्कोर कांचीन में भी वहां की सरकार की तजवीज थी कि वहां एक जांच समिति नियुक्त करें, लेकिन वह भी प्रेस कमीशन की वजह से रुक गई। अब मैं यह अर्ज कर रहा हूँ कि अब जब कि हमारे पत्रकारों ने इतने दिन सब किया, उनके सब का प्याला लबरेज हो रहा है, और अब आप उन्हें ज्यादा दिनों तक उम्मीद पर नहीं रख सकते। पत्रकार के बारे में मैं यह भी कह देना चाहता हूँ कि वह किसी से दया की भिक्षा नहीं मांगता, वह केवल अपना अधिकार चाहता है। वह प्रगतिशील है, उसके पास हृदय है, मस्तिष्क है, हाथ की ताकत है, वह ब्रिटिश साम्राज्यवाद से भी लड़ा और यदि आप उस पर विश्वास करेंगे तो सभी प्रतिक्रियावादी ताकतों से वह आगे भी लड़ेगा। लेकिन उसे आप छुड़ें भी नहीं, उसे दिक भी न करें, परेशान न करें। अगर ऐसा किया जायगा तो हो सकता है कि वह इस बात का भी प्रयत्न करे कि आज के समाज व सरकार के रूप में भी कुछ परिवर्तन हो। (समय की घंटी)

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैंने प्रेस कमीशन रिपोर्ट के प्रस्ताव पर एक संशोधन रखा है। यदि आपने महान्ति जी को ४० मिनट बोलने के लिये दिये हैं, तो मैं समझता हूँ कि मेरे साथ ४, ५ मिनट की रियायत तो आप कर ही सकते हैं।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please finish it soon.

बाबू गोपीनाथ सिंह : मैं कहना तो बहुत चाहता था, लेकिन दो एक बात ही कह सकता हूँ इतने थोड़े समय में। मैं ऐसा नहीं समझता कि इन सिफारिशों को कार्यरूप में परिणत करने के लिए कोई इन्सर्मा-उन्टबल डिफिकल्टी है। मेरा खयाल है कि जो कठिनाइयाँ हमारे मंत्री महोदय महसूस कर रहे हैं वे केवल कल्पना मात्र हैं। उन कठिनाइयों का हल मौजूद है। अगर उनके सामने कोई वैधानिक कठिनाई हो तो विधान में भी परिवर्तन किया जा सकता है। उनको अगर कानूनी सलाहकार ने कोई सलाह दी हो तो मैं यह कह सकता हूँ कि हिन्दुस्तान में आप जैसी चाहें वैसी कानूनी सलाह ले सकते हैं, सिर्फ पैसा आपके पास होना चाहिए। अभी हाल में सुप्रीम कोर्ट में एक मुकदमे में आपके सबसे बड़े कानूनी सलाहकार, एटॉर्नी जनरल, सरकार के खिलाफ एक वकालती लड़ाई लड़ रहे थे। उसका फैसला हो चुका है और सारे देश का वह मसला सरकार के सामने आयेगा और परेशान करेगा। तो हो सकता है कि जो आपके सलाहकार हैं वे आपके पक्ष में एक सलाह देंगे और दूसरे पक्ष में दूसरी सलाह देंगे। इसीलिए मैं आपसे यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि आप केवल न्याय की दृष्टि से इस चीज को देखें। मेरा प्रस्ताव श्रमजीवी पत्रकार, जिसे मैं इंटरलेक्चुअल प्रोलीटीरिएट कहता हूँ, उसकी तरफ से न्याय की मांग करता है। इट इज ए क्राइ फार जस्टिस। इस मामले में, यदि हमें समाज कल्याण अर्थात् वेलफेयर स्टेट कायम करना है और समाज-

वादी समाज स्थापित करना है, तो यही बात संगत लगती है और मुझे आशा है कि डा० केसकर जैसे हृदयवान व्यक्ति जो सूचना विभाग पर शासनारूढ़ हैं, इन सिफारिशों को पूर्णतया स्वीकार कर लें।

मैं यह भी कह देना चाहता हूँ कि इन सुझावों को स्वीकार करने से पत्रकारिता को भी लाभ होगा। हमारी सरकार यह चाहती है कि गांव के आदमी नागरिकता के मामले में, अर्थात् सिविक फोर्स के मामले में जागृत हों। उनमें अधिक उत्तरदायित्व की भावना आए, और हमारे देश में जो डेमोक्रेसी स्थापित हुई है वह सफल हो, सो यह उद्देश्य तभी सफलीभूत हो सकता है जब गांव गांव में आप के अखबार पहुंच सकें। गांव गांव में बड़े अखबार नहीं पहुंच सकते, स्थानीय पत्र ही वहां पहुंच सकते हैं, और स्थानीय पत्र भी तब ही पहुंच सकते हैं जब वहां आप स्थानीय पत्रों को पनपने का अवसर दें। इससे यह भी होगा कि पत्र-क्लाकार अपने स्थान में रहकर अपना गुजारा भी कर सकेंगे और वहां की जनता की सेवा भी करेंगे और उसको इस बात के लिए मजबूर न होना पड़ेगा कि वह बड़े बड़े शहरों में जाए और बड़े बड़े अखबारों में काम करे। इस तरह से आप डेमोक्रेसी की भी सर्विस करेंगे, समाज की भी सेवा करेंगे, पत्रकारों की भी सेवा करेंगे, और उससे अपने समाज की शान, डिग्नटी, को ऊंचा उठाने में भी आपको मदद मिलेगी।

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, it is gratifying to note that over this issue of the recommendations of the Press Commission we are all broadly united and for once I find that the division between those who sit on your right and those who sit on your left has disappeared and that we are all speaking in one voice. If the Government is in need of the opinions of the Members of Parliament, the Government

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta]

has got it; now the opinion has been clearly expressed that the recommendations of the Press Commission should be implemented.

Sir, as you know, this Commission was appointed by the Government itself consisting of people of its own choice and on the Commission, there were not the people who were known for their revolutionary or very radical ideas. Now, this Commission has come to certain conclusions which, I think, deserve appreciation by all sections of the House. Not that I do not have certain suggestions to make for improvement of matters, but nonetheless I say that here is a basis for taking steps as far as the Government is concerned.

Sir, I was a little distressed when I read the report of the speech made by the hon. Minister in reply to the debate in the other House. I should have thought that after hearing the speeches he would speak in a different strain and would uphold the recommendations of the Commission and give an assurance for their implementation. But he has struck a different note. Sir, you know that it was the Prime Minister of India who gave the country to understand that the majority of the recommendations of the Press Commission would be implemented and it was the Minister for Information and Broadcasting who in speeches and in general observations gave us to understand that he was in favour of implementing the decisions. We all felt that probably the decision will be taken along that line. But to-day I cannot say this of him. Yet I feel that he should really seriously ponder over as to what has been said in Parliament.

Rightly, Sir, tribute has been paid to the Chairman of this Press Commission who is no more with us and the Minister said he died a martyr to the cause. I hope, Sir, his martyrdom would be respected by implementation of the recommendations. I hope the Commission, to which he

has rightly paid tribute, would be respected in its implementation and not in its rejection. The Government and the Minister in particular are now put to a test of their honour whether the counsels of the press barons are going to prevail or whether the advice and views of the pressmen, the public and Parliament will prevail. Such is the question that has been posed before the Government when it is taking a decision. I do not know what the tentative decisions are but if they are on the lines of the hon. Minister's speech, they need to be altered in the light of the discussion. The country should know to what extent you respect the opinion of Parliament when over this issue unanimous opinion has been expressed and it is this that you implement the decisions and recommendations of the Press Commission.

Sir, I missed another thing when he spoke. He did not pay any tribute to the working journalists but for whose co-operation, but for whose compilation of documents and evidence it would not have been possible for the Commission to discern the facts that have come to light and which are before us. I know, Sir, that at least a dozen journalists have been victimised for co-operating with the work of the Commission. Mr. V. N. Singh of the "Searchlight", an assistant editor, was given the sack because he worked on the special body which was set up for preparing evidence by working journalists for the Press Commission. I also know that a journalist of the "Indian Express" has been given the sack because he had the courage to say something at a public meeting against the chains' method. I would like to know also what has been done with regard to these people. But before I pass on to the other subject I would ask the hon. Minister to tell us as to what letter he got from Nirmal Ghosh of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No names; don't mention any names.

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:** I have to mention certain names because the names are there.

**MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Don't mention names.

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:** I am not casting any reflection. I would like to know whether he received any letter from any important personality of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" and what that letter contained. Sir, it is most regrettable that when the working journalists have not succeeded in going on a deputation to the Prime Minister for the last one year or so in spite of the fact that they passed a resolution a few months ago requesting for an audience with the Prime Minister, I find gentlemen of the Press, the owners of the Press get very easy access to the Prime Minister, and it does not speak well of a Government which claims to be democratic. I would leave it to the Prime Minister to reconcile it with his code of morality. But I think, Sir, the country can demand an explanation from the hon. Minister as to why the journalists are not being consulted while the owners are being consulted in this manner.

Sir, I need not speak much on the concentration in the hands of the monopolists. Figures have been given here and I say that the hon. Minister should recognise this fact. If by standing at the foot of the Himalayas he does not see the mountains, I cannot make him see. But I think the fact has to be recognised that the Indian Press today is in the hands of the monopolists who are motivated not by the pioneering zeal of Bal Gangadhar Tilak but by profit, by desires to corrupt our public life, by desires to advance their selfish ends and to uphold their vested interests. We want the press to be rescued from the hands of such people. This demand has been made variously in different contexts of course by various Members of the House and steps should be taken in that direction. Sir, I would suggest a few things in this connection.

Now this diffusion of ownership which has been recommended here should be implemented and I think the hon. Minister should consider the proposal of the working journalists in which they have said that the shares should be restricted, that none should get more than five shares and that none who has an investment in a financial or industrial concern of the value of Rs. 10 lakhs or more should have any share in the press. Such a suggestion should be seriously considered. I think the shares in monopolists' hands should be thrown open to the public and to the press employees. That is how you can start the process of diffusion of ownership. I think it is essential for the democratisation of the press and for ensuring its independence and its proper functioning. Freedom of the press is unthinkable if the monopolist sits heavily on it and that is something which the hon. Minister should take note of.

Then much is said about the industry. We know how profits are made, how enormous profits are being made. Not a word is stated in this Report because there is a lot of manipulation and double book-keeping. But if you read this Report carefully it is stated, and you will find that the industry is able to make a colossal profit, I do not know how, probably by various types of fraudulent behaviour. But here is a very classical example of finished fraud and this fraud has to be put a stop to. It is stated that Audit Bureau and all that has become an institution for manipulating figures and showing false circulation to deceive the Government and the public. Sir, the industry is making enormous profits. I cannot think of the *Hindustan Standard* in 15 year's time making an enormous profits acquiring assets which run into several millions. I cannot think of such fat fortune being made on a profit of Rs. 50,000. The Press is making Rs. 7 lakhs profit. Therefore, much is being concealed and that is to be found out. It is all due to the manipulation of

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta.] shares. Look at the Press barons; look at the big people who run in cars, do not write anything but roll about in cars. Look at them and you will see that it is not Rs. 7 lakhs, it is much more. I can tell you from my experience of Calcutta. The *Hindustan Standard* today is one of the multimillionaire concerns. If the profit were Rs. 50,000 or a lakh, they would not have so much money, so much profit, acquired so much material and equipment and such show of wealth and all that. I leave it to the hon. Minister to find out.

Then with regard to the P. T. I. and the U. P. I., important suggestions have been made. I think it is important that you take the decision to create public trusts. As far as the P. T. I. is concerned, it is a great hoax when we are told that certain representatives of the language papers have been taken on the P.T.I. Board. It is a great hoax. Who are these representatives? What are their affiliations? How do they come? By which door do they enter the P. T. I. Board? These are things which you must take into account. You do not like names. If I give the names it will be out that those are merely decoys put on the P. T. I. Board to deceive the public and, if I may say so, the hon. Minister.

I appreciate him when he said that no assistance should be given to the P. T. I., if it does not move in the right direction. But what are the steps, to make the P. T. I. move in the right direction? Can't you hold a meeting of the shareholders and see that the P.T.I. reorganises itself and conforms to the public standards that you want to promote and then consider fresh proposals for assistance? Why must you leave the initiative in the hands of those people who cannot be trusted? That is what I would ask the Government to consider.

Then, Sir, about the U. P. I. also a suggestion has been made. I know certain employees have been taken, but who are these employees. If a high executive officer is put on a Board, would it be democratisation? When we demand popular representation, this kind of deception of the people should be put a stop to. You should proceed to reorganise the U. P. I. along the lines which would conform to the interests of the newspapers, the journalists and also the public.

Sir, I do not want the Press in India to propagate imperialistic ideas, to speak against the liberation struggle, to ridicule the struggle for colonial liberation, to speak against the Asian solidarity and all that. I want such a Press to be banned in India. Let there be various types of ideas and let them be given expression to. I have no quarrel with it. But we stand by certain solid principles of national life. We do not like, therefore, such imperialistic and foreign Press in our country.

Now, I come to the question of matter. It is important that we control the matter in the sense that wrong types of things do not go into the Press. What do you find here? News about the workers' struggles, peasants' struggles, about refugees and others, whose problems of life are national problems, their expressions and strivings do not find a place in our Press. And what is the thing that gets a place. Here it is. Princess Margaret's affair with Townsend is featured. Then I came across the other day in "The Statesman" an illustrated feature on Sherman Cooper's wardrobe. I think it is an eternal shame to our journalism to publish such things. We should see that public pressure is brought to bear upon them so that such things are not published. (*Time bell rings.*) Here is an interesting example. Sir, I want a few minutes more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have taken full 15 minutes.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I want five minutes more, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I have a lot of things which I wanted to say but because of lack of time I am not able to say them all. Here is an interesting thing. An Assistant Editor wrote to a correspondent saying, "Whenever you send a feature to us, please be particular about the fact that our readers do desire glimpses of the flesh and youth." This is what the Assistant Editor of a Hindi weekly published from Bombay wrote to the correspondent. There is another interesting utterance by the Commission with regard to another paper in Bombay which was striving to maintain itself by producing the usual mixture of sex and crime. The Commission says: "Whether it is sensationalism or pornography, the question is whom does it benefit? and the answer is—the proprietor." And there are all types of proprietors. I shall read out from this book. It says:

"The proprietor of one of the biggest newspapers in this country volunteered the statement that he had committed every crime short of murder! Not knowing whether to take this as an attempt at humour, we put to him the specific question whether he had committed dacoity. His answer was more or less to the effect that the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak."

We know that this spirit is so dangerous that it has to be stifled if the Press has to be liberated from this evil spirit. This is about the matter in the papers.

Sir, the late Shri Sarat Chandra Bose in the Bengal Assembly exposed how the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was publishing hand-outs of the British Information Services as editorials and the allegation was backed up with so much evidence that even the authori-

ties connected with that paper had to own up that charge. And I say that Shri Sarat Chandra Bose was at one time an eminent Congress leader. Sir, these are the matters that go into the Press. I can tell you another instance. The workers of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* struck work in 1948. Not only they did not publish anything in that paper but no one could write anything about it in any other paper because the Press barons saw to it that the struggle of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* workers did not find any place in any of the newspapers of the country. Such are the resources of our Press. I will give yet another instance. One day I was horrified to see a photograph of some women strikers before a cotton mill with the caption "They are hired women". These are the scandalous things they do.

Now, about the working journalists. But before I proceed to this subject I would like to mention here another instance. Yesterday Mr. Dwivedy spoke about.....(*Interruptions.*) I can say that two papers in Calcutta have banked heavily on the riots. One leading newspaper built up its business by writing all sorts of things on the two riots—the one that occurred in 1926 and another in 1951. The better paper fanned communal passions in order to build up its circulation.

Now, coming to the working journalists. I am myself a working journalist and therefore I hope you will allow me to dilate on this point. Sir, I entirely endorse the recommendations of the Press Commission. Not that I am satisfied with them. I want better pay and better conditions but let these recommendations be accepted. You have to fix the minimum wage by law. It is no use talking about a National Minimum Wage Bill and other Acts, because you have different types of minimum wages for various categories of employees, in the Government service, in schools and colleges and so on. Here too we want

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta]

minimum wages to be fixed by law. It is very important. I cannot say much more because the time at my disposal is very short. I would only like to say that the independence of the journalists, their standard, their quality all will depend on the conditions under which they are allowed to function. It is not merely a question of giving a social deal to them, it is a question of guaranteeing independence, freedom and democracy in our Press. Therefore from that broader angle, I would beg of the Government to accept the recommendations of the Commission in this connection (*Time bell rings*). A few minutes more, Sir.

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have taken full five minutes. Dr Subbarayan.

DR P SUBBARAYAN (*Madras*): Mr Deputy Chairman, it is always most difficult to follow my friend who spoke last because I do not possess that tempestuous eloquence he is capable of, nor the sound and fury that he creates. But that apart, I have studied the Report of the Press Commission with some care and I think it must be said to the credit of the Chairman, the late Mr Justice Rajadhyaksha that he took a great deal of trouble to do what he thought was a public service. It cannot be said that the Members of the Press Commission were extremists in any sense of the term. In fact, they went into the whole question with the care it deserved and made certain recommendations. I was glad that the Minister in charge said that he wanted to listen to the opinions in this House before the Government made up their mind with regard to the decisions that they will come to in respect of the recommendations of the Commission. They have already done something in the case of putting the journalists on the same basis as trade unionists. I am one of those who feel that we should not object to trade unionism among the journalists because they are as

good workers as any other workers in any other industry. If you think that the Press is necessary in this country, then the journalist is a component part of it and is as much a part of journalism as the owner or the proprietor. Therefore, I feel that they ought to be contented and a minimum wage should be fixed for them as has been recommended by the Commission. The minimum wage that they have fixed varies from Rs 150 to Rs 225 as suggested by the Commission. Considering the material you want and the nature of the men you want to recruit from, I do not feel that this is a very high scale at all. On the other hand, I think they have been careful to consider what would be the effect on journalism if such wages were not given to working journalists and after taking into consideration the material at their disposal, they have come to this definite decision and I hope the hon. Minister, before he comes to his conclusion, will give great attention to this matter because if the Press is to function in the right manner, I think it is up to the Government to take care of the working journalists. I think this is one of the essential recommendations which are to find a place in any decision the Government may take on this matter.

Next, I come to the question of the price-page schedule. I know there is a feeling among the members of the Press—I do not want to go into the titles like 'Press Barons' etc. I feel it is quite out of place to talk about Press barons. The Press is as necessary for the functioning of a democracy as anything else, and we must admit that these people who are dubbed as 'Press Barons' have done a service to the country by the way they have conducted their newspapers. And I feel the country does owe a debt of gratitude to some of the leading journals in this country. At the same time, we cannot be blind to the fact that what is wanted in the future is the development of what I would call the language newspapers. This is very essential if democracy is



to function in the right manner, because after all, as they say, you must educate your masters, the voters. If you are going to do that, then you will understand how important the language newspapers are going to be in the future. Therefore, I feel that in the interests of the language newspapers, the price-page schedule is as important as anything else. There may be some who feel that they should not be controlled in regard to price-page schedule, because in the past, there was no place for such controls. But all the same, working as a democracy and thinking of the future of this country, it is important that we should help the language newspapers.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: The hon. Dr Subbarayan's speech has lulled an hon. lady Member to sleep.

DR P SUBBARAYAN: I did not hear a word of what the hon. Member said.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Not necessary.

DR P SUBBARAYAN: I do feel that it is very necessary for the hon. Minister to take into consideration the position of the language newspapers and the important place they would occupy in the future. I do not mean to say that we should neglect the English dailies altogether because I am one of those who feel that English has come to stay and will stay in this country for hundreds of years. I am not ashamed of it either. But at the same time, I feel that in view of the large number of people who do not understand the English language, it is very necessary to develop the language newspaper in such a way that it would get a large reading public. I know there is a great feeling against some of the so-called chain newspapers. But one should also realise that they also have their place in the newspaper world. There are large chain newspapers, for instance, in the United States of America and they do try to create public opinion in the manner they want. But I think people who read

these newspapers are shrewd enough to come to their own conclusions. I do not feel that we need rise against these single-owned newspapers. They have their own value in the body politics. But at the same time, I feel that the Commission deserve credit for recommending that there should be a Press Registrar, to which, I know, some of these big newspapers are opposed. For instance, they suggest that the Press Registrar should not have the function of getting the statistics of circulation, etc. But I would like to remind these people that even in America, where there are these large-chain newspapers, these papers have got to supply to the Post Office the number of their circulation, advertisement revenue and things like that. Therefore, what is recommended by the Press Commission goes no further than that. They want to get the proper statistics and rightly too, because people ought to know what is being done by the Press, what is the circulation etc. It is in the interests of the Press that these things should be available to the public. The advertiser does not advertise because a particular paper is dear to him, but he thinks of the circulation of that paper. If circulation is to be known what better help can the Government give to these people than having proper and correct statistics of circulation?

In this connection, I would remind the hon. Minister that I find advertisements like the Public Service Commission often do not find a place in the language newspapers. It may be because they feel that people who appear for these examinations understand English and therefore, an advertisement in the English daily is sufficient to attract the candidates they want. But, in view of the educative value that they possess, I would really ask the hon. Minister to see that some of these advertisements are published also in the language newspapers in the interests of the future growth of democracy. We are against English at one stage and at the same

[Dr. P. Subbarayan.] time, we still believe in the English language and advertisements in the English newspapers for the candidates for the Public Services. Therefore, I would really urge upon the hon. Minister that he should influence his colleagues to publish some of these advertisements in the language newspapers as well.

With regard to the advertisements also, I want to say that there should be freedom given to the newspapers. I know the price-page schedule, for instance, confines advertisements to 40 per cent, but at the same time they say that the larger the circulation of a newspaper is, the lesser sum for advertisement should be charged. I do not agree with this point of view of the Commission. I think what is the market value should be taken by the newspaper concerned.

One word more and that is with regard to the Press Trust of India. I want to give an example to hon. Members here. For instance, there is a small—I could not say small, a fairly influential Tamil newspaper in Coimbatore, Navayuga, and it is made to pay, for what they get, C-Service of the P.T.I. Rs. 1,700 whereas if the same thing is given to a paper published in the urban areas, it is only Rs. 600. I would like to know whether this is a fair way of treating what I would call a rural newspaper. In fact, they are making it difficult for the rural newspaper to have the service they need to cater to the public at large. I think, the hon. Minister should look into this matter when deciding the question with regard to the Press Trust of India.

I am grateful to you, Sir, for the time you have given me and for giving me an opportunity to speak in this debate.

SHRI RAGHAVENDRARA O (Hyderabad): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I believe in the freedom of the press. Freedom of the press demands that there should be no interference in any shape or form from any quarter what-

soever. In India, we generally claim that the press happens to be not the Fourth Estate but it holds the position of a Second Estate, next only to the Parliament, since none of the other two Estates any more exist here. It, therefore, becomes a great responsibility of every one of us to guard this freedom. In the midst of highly confusing and conflicting issues raised by the Report, we find that the only hope to save the press seems to be to find the immediate method of bringing into existence the much-needed Press Council, as recommended by the Report.

The basic problem round which all other issues revolve happens to be the Press Council, preferably an entirely voluntary body or organisation. This can only be achieved by the united and joint efforts of the persons concerned. Till such time, no other piece-meal legislation or methods will lead to a satisfactory solution of the problems. A conference representing all the concerned organisation can help to set up the Council.

My aim has been solely—in moving the amendment, however unpalatable it might be—to bring the fact to your notice that there have been complaints from representatives of newspaper organisations and working journalists over the non-representation in the Press Commission. It is perhaps for this reason, the failure to recognize the various vital forces that go to make the Indian press, that the Press Commission's recommendations were not able to evoke universal approval and support. Hence such a delay. After all the Commission has dealt with only the problems of 330 papers. There are over 3000 periodicals in India and they have been entirely left out. Sir, here is a comprehensive survey of the Indian press. The tributes are entirely due to the untiring efforts of the Chairman, Justice Rajadhyaksha. Perhaps, had the other members of the Commission belonged to the profession proper, an entirely different

story of the service and status of the Indian press would have been unfolded. Somehow it strikes me that the tone and the conclusions of the whole report run as if the press was held as if it were a culprit or an accused in the dock. Whatever be the verdict, the Indian press which has an indomitable faith "in the higher powers that rule the destiny" could never be cowed down.

The origin of the Commission does not seem to be very clear. Of course, the origin of the Royal Press Commission (1947-49) in the United Kingdom could be traced to the proceedings of the British Parliament, when it was asserted that there was "a progressive decline in the calibre of editors and the quality of British journalism. These developments the speakers suggested were likely to continue, and if unchecked would endanger not only the freedom of the press but the welfare of the country....."

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: Sir, the Opposition benches are completely vacant.

SHRI RAGHAVENDRARAO: However, on the other hand, so rightly Justice Rajadhyaksha had to admit that "the conduct of the (Indian) Press had on the whole been such as to do credit to any country in the world." What exactly led one to think that so soon after the winning of freedom the Indian press, which had so gloriously fought shoulder to shoulder as vanguard in the freedom struggle, would betray the cause for which it stood all these past years? Or, could it be due to the crime of having kept journalism alive in this land of infant mortality? The history of the Indian press is full of pathetic and pitiable woes of infant mortality. During the course of a century, out of so many, hardly a dozen or so, throughout the length and breadth of India, especially in places like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and Delhi, have made themselves a success—due perhaps to the vigilance of generations of

newspaper men. India is proud of these sentinels of freedom who kept the torch burning despite the inhuman, alien domination. The springing up of monopolies or chains, in the course of the freedom fight, might have proved to be inevitable. After all, could this circulation of some 25 lakhs prove to be such a menace to a population of over 36 crores? This colossal figure of 25 lakhs for the whole of India comes nowhere near even one single paper of Fleet Street, not to speak of Japan, Russia or America where circulations soar much more. Instead of finding fault or trying to throttle it in its infancy, by restricting its growth, allow it to grow untrammelled. Let there be wild growth even! Any attempt at grafting or cutting down the pages will not help either the big or the small papers. Journalism is always full of life. A press with an individuality, ingenuity and creative genius, needs no Government patronage or interference. The main problem of circulation demands huge investment necessary for a most up-to-date plant and other materials, for raising the standard and for making it attractive with all the modern devices, such as illustrations, articles and cartoons etc., embracing all walks of life. Circulation cannot be built by mere rationing or price-page schedule.

Then, again, something more than mere material factors count in the Indian Press. Here, from the History of Indian Journalism, that has been published by the Commission, we find the late Shri A. B. Kolhatker, pioneer in Marathi journalism in the second decade of the century, introduced a number of features which were till then not known in Marathi journalism. He had an engaging style; he created a new taste among the readers; his writings caught the imagination of the people; he carried political discussions right to the door of not only the lower middle class but the masses. Circulations cannot be built by restricting pages and sales, but by taking a bold plunge and mak-

[Shri Raghavendrarao.] ing a dash in winning the reading habit of the masses. However, there is a wrong notion that sales and advertisement go in a vicious circle. A great journalist of the eminence of Mr. Wickham Steed asserts that it is the quantity and quality of circulation that counts. He remarks:

"there was something amiss, too, with the supposition that biggest circulations would always bring the largest revenue from advertisers. The power of a newspaper to sell the goods it advertises must depend to some extent upon the buying power of its readers."

Neither any journal, nor any journalist, with an honesty of purpose or a loyalty to the cause of the journal would ever suffer or die.

(Time bell rings.)

I want some five minutes more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Only two minutes. Please finish.

SHRI RAGHAVENDRARAO: Our news agencies seem to have had neither the time nor the resources, soon after the achievement of freedom, during the transitory period, to establish themselves on sound footings. The Press Commission itself has made the recommendation. Let the Government go to the rescue of our national news services. Allow the journalists of talent to go to every place of vantage and importance to every country and all over the world. This would not only give us a correct perspective of the world events but will help our people and the Government to have a proper understanding of our foreign policy. It would be relevant to mention here that much of the success of the British policies was due to the inside and detailed pictures which the correspondents of the London Times supply to the British public from the remotest corners of the world. I have to speak something about the

working journalists and their pay scales.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Many members have already spoken on that. Your Chairman has spoken.

SHRI RAGHAVENDRARAO: I don't belong to that organisation.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are not a working journalist?

SHRI RAGHAVENDRARAO: But I hold entirely different views.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Then leave them alone.

SHRI RAGHAVENDRARAO: There is a feeling that the struggling of working journalist perhaps should have received a better deal. The present state of affairs demands a decent pay scale comparable to the present rising cost of living all over India without any regional distinction. In this respect, the Commission has miserably failed and the most pathetic factor had been the complete exclusion of that band of district, mofussil and interior correspondents from the benefits of the pay scale. It is said that so far back as 1947 the South India journalists had demanded broad national salary scales for staffmen, similar retainers and lineage rate for free-lance correspondents; something like 150—300, 650 and 1000. While they have demanded Rs. 150 as the basic pay, there the Commission has mentioned only Rs. 125. Then there is no mention of pension benefits. There was a suggestion for an integrated system of pension-cum-provident fund-cum-gratuity. Then there was the vexed question of the gentlemen of the Press being relegated to the category of workmen. It does not speak very highly of the future of journalism in this country. Whatever be one's own views, there should be at least honesty in public affairs. The admirers of Rajadhyaksha who were always so vociferous in demanding the head of the managements on the charger, conveniently try to forget as to what the Chairman had clearly stated in

respect of this fundamental problem affecting the status of journalists.

(Time bell rings.)

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND (Madhya Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, at the outset I would like to associate myself with the tributes that were paid to the late Chairman of this Commission Mr. Rajadhyaksha and in saying this, I would also like to point out that he has brought to bear on this report his generosity of mind and breadth of vision, which was so characteristic of him that from his earlier days he was always called by his friends 'Raja' meaning king not only because that was his name but always the friends said that he had those characteristics which should really be the characteristics of a real kind of man. Sir, the time at the disposal of the Members is very short to deal with the suggestions in this voluminous report, that unless one had the ability of Panini to say things in aphorisms, it would not be possible to say the things that one would like to say even on the important of the recommendations which are dealt with in the last few pages of the summary of this report. The report no doubt has been long awaited, and to get a chance therefore today to offer our reactions is indeed welcome but one cannot blame the Government entirely for taking all this time to implement because when Government does take action, Government has to see that whatever it suggests is carried out and is practicable. From that point of view, as has been said in the preliminary speech and also in this annexure, Government has already taken action on some of these recommendations mentioned on page 79 onwards of annexure II of this Press Commission—Comments and Reactions—and in some cases Government has referred the matters to the State Governments. Government has of course said that the reason for delay in taking final action has been that it wanted the views of both the Houses

before it could finalise it and now that the report has come before this House and has already come before the other House, it has come forward with a promise of taking action within a week and also that if any of the recommendations of the majority of the Members of both Houses are contrary to what decisions they are contemplating, they are prepared to revise them. But if I may point out, it is hardly possible for the Government to say that within the limited time that the Members had at their disposal and naturally from Members who can speak with experience it would be possible for the Government to get all the guidance that they want and from that point of view, if I may add, this guidance for the Government in a way should be from the press representatives themselves and of which there is no dearth, as is even pointed out in this brief report of Comments and Reactions. So, though the views of the representatives of the people are valuable, that need not be or need not have been the only hitch in implementation. The real hitch is in Government taking a decision as to how to tackle the vested interests and how to fulfil all the hopes and aspirations that are raised by the report as far as monetary liabilities are concerned and for that reason the various States have to be consulted. I would, instead of going into the details of these 21 items mentioned here in the last few pages, take up some of the points—the five points so to say like Panch Shila, which the Minister referred to in his speech, on which especially he wanted to seek light viz., service conditions, constitution of a Press Council, price-page schedule, news services and foreign ownership and to this I would like myself to add advertisements and newsprint. With regard to the first and most important question, it is considered the human aspect of this report and for which in a way it was really necessary to appoint this Press Commission apart from other important aspects of the press being a

[Dr. Shrimati Seeta Parmanand.] important an arm, or for the time being even more important an arm of public education, than even primary education and social education, because we know how, whatever is written in a paper is listened to by so many illiterate people, if one literate person can read out to them, and how the busy intelligentsia of the people who are always occupied with their daily work themselves, acquaint themselves with events of importance in the country, particularly the policies in the country by reading in the little time that they can get at their breakfast table or in the night from the newspapers. So in the making of the new independent nation, it has been realized what an important part the press can play and as such it is necessary to give better conditions of work to these people. In this respect, I cannot do better than emphasise this aspect and quote a short passage from what Justice Chagla has said:

"I can well understand the opposition in certain quarters to the journalists constituting themselves into a trade union and of industrial and labour laws being applied to them. But one must not forget that even journalists are human and have human needs. No one can give of his best unless he works in decent living and working conditions. A lawyer or a doctor only starves if he has no work to do. But journalist starves even when he works and works hard. I know the frustration and bitter cynicism from which a briefless barrister suffers. But that frustration and cynicism does not have very serious consequences. But in the case of a journalist he has to do his day's job whatever his mental suffering may be."

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN) in the Chair]

That summarises the situation and from that point of view if we do not want the journalist to preach the

gospel of cynicism and frustration to the whole country, we have to see, even from a narrow selfish point of view, if not from the human point of view which should be a really primary consideration, that their conditions of living are improved at once and their daily work is put on more stabilized and equitable basis.

4 P.M.

In the time at my disposal. I am not able to elaborate this point. Before I leave the point, I would like to make a reference to one case. People are not to be referred to by name, but I may refer to Shri Rama Rao our erstwhile colleague in this House and the way in which he had to suffer humiliation at the hands of a big paper magnate from where, after thirty years in journalism, he was thrown out of his job, with the result that for the last eighteen months he has been reduced to going about without having a regular job. This at once sums up the condition to which an eminent journalist who is looked upon to by all people can be reduced. Can there be a greater sense of insecurity in the present working conditions for journalists? Sir, if they are to give their best to the country, in this powerful educative arm and this powerful arm of publicity in the country's development programme, they must be given better conditions of life and service.

Next, I come to the question of the constitution of the Press Council and I refer to it particularly because the hon. Minister said that on this particular point he would like to have the views of hon. Members of this House so as to be able to take action. The other points with regard to the Press Council have been referred to before, but with regard to "the Chairman" of the Press Council I would only like to add this much, that there is no reason to fear if the Chief Justice of the country, the Chief Justice

at the Supreme Court appoints the Chairman who would be a High Court judge and that would not in any way be a fetter to the proper functioning of the Press and would not lead to governmental interference with the Press Council. As conditions are today, if we want to have an impartial outlook, when there are so many internal factions among press people,—we know what has happened in the recent case of the P.T.I.—if we want all the press people to have full confidence in the Chairman of the Press Council, at least as an interim measure, the Chairman should be appointed as recommended here and there should be no complaint if this arrangement were to be made.

With regard to the price-page schedule, I would like to say that this is absolutely necessary, if some sort of uniformity of prices and reduction of prices are to be brought about and if the benefit of more papers being started in this country is to be enjoyed by a greater majority in this country. I would like to give the instance of the *Free Press Journal* which has been setting an example of how this can be done by making available to the people a paper at the cost of, I think, one anna for six to ten pages.

With regard to the news service agencies, I would only like to say that experience has shown that ownership of news agency by the newspapers themselves and its conduct on a no-profit and no-loss basis is best calculated to achieve an impartial, efficient and comprehensive service. So that should be done. Also it should be a "Trust" in which the owner or owners of any other management should relinquish all interests and power should vest completely in an elected body and that would best serve the public interest. So, I do not agree with what was said this morning by Dr. Kunzru when he said that he did not see any justification to change the present arrangement of the P.T.I. He

asked why a limit should be put on the dividends or profits of these newspaper concerns when other industries were not touched. But I feel that perhaps newspapers should see and understand the aims of the Government and the Government's policies and they should set an example. But this is such a large question that it would not be worthwhile going into the ethics of it just now.

Therefore, I pass on to the next point, namely foreign ownership of papers. Against such ownership I would like to add that apart from the dangers which lurk in the foreign ownership of the Press pointed out by Shrimati Lakshmi Menon, there is this danger of its creating an inferiority complex among our people. Also, the Press, I feel should not be looked upon as an ordinary business concern, something to make money, where the capitalist just invests his capital, finding no other avenue of getting more interest, for his money. The aim should be to have a Press Trust or Corporation and just as workers in an industry, say in the mining industry or other industries are supposed to be the owners of that industry, so also the working journalists and other press people should ultimately be the owners of this industry.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): It is nearly time, Madam.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARNANAND: Sir, I have an important point to speak about Madhya Pradesh, the place I am coming from and I am on my last two points now. And I am the only person speaking on this Report from Madhya Pradesh which is the place where you have the only newsprint mill in the whole country. I have to say a few words on that too and I hope you will kindly give me a little more time.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): Two minutes.

DR. SHRIMAT) SEETA PARMANAND With regard to advertisements, much has been said by Shrimati Violet Alva and I would only like to add that apart from the factor of distribution the patronage which Government at present gives through advertisements, takes away that independent attitude which newspapers should have so as to be able to give proper ventilation to the interests of the people and the newspapers should not be subservient even to the Government because of patronage. From that point of view, it is necessary to equally distribute Government advertisements among different papers.

As regards obscene advertisements etc., I feel that instead of leaving that matter to be dealt with in the Bills connected with food adulteration etc., it should be brought into the proposed Bill which is going to deal with newspapers and magazines.

Lastly, I come to the question of newsprint. As hon. Members are aware, the only newsprint mill in the country is in Madhya Pradesh in the backwoods part of Khandwa District and the capital that has been put in it by the State Government is about Rs 25 crores and nearly the same amount is given by the Central Government. As has been pointed out in the Report, this mill is supposed to produce newsprint, to meet half the needs of the country which will be half of 60,000 tons per year. So every day, when the mill goes into full production it will produce 100 tons. Unless Government makes arrangements to at once decide the method of sale, the benefit that is expected to be derived from this very first venture of its kind in this country would be lost to the country and to the industry. The Central Government is thinking of starting a State Trading Corporation and it has been mentioned in the Report that importing of newsprint should be done only through the State Trading Corporation, and it should be pooled with the newsprint

that will be produced so as to equalise the prices. This is necessary because at present, the mechanical pulp is produced at a high production cost and as the bamboo pulp produced from the forests is not of the proper colour, the pulp has to be mixed with mechanical pulp and the price would not be competitive. But as is usual, the Government took such a long time over this sales arrangement that at present the mill had actually to stop production, mainly because there was no storing place. And even now, if Parliament or the Central Government takes a long time over making these arrangements for the State Trading Corporation, the result would be that some arrangements would have to be made through some private selling agency and that is sure to deprive the country ultimately the benefit of this cheap newsprint.

I am not able to understand why, when Government is giving subsidy for the consumption of even inferior variety of cloth produced in our country, it does not call a conference of the newspaper owners—I am sure they will all rise to the occasion and cooperate—and ask them to buy up this paper that is produced now at the rate of 30 tons per day. This will meet the requirements of two big newspapers in the country, papers like the 'Times of India'. The arrangement, if any should be made soon, otherwise complications would arise which, in turn, would lead to the paper agency being given to some private magnates. If such a contingency were to arise, Government's policy of giving paper only for the newspapers will be defeated and this paper will find its way to printing spurious and dirty literature. This paper would be cut up, stock-piled and ultimately sold in competition when Government, at a later time, comes to some arrangement on its own. Not only that, there will be a situation in which the State Government will have to sell this concern to some private agency.



I hope that the State Trading Corporation that is going to be set up would not go the way the Industrial Finance Corporation and various other corporations have gone so that, from their very inception, It would be a dead loss. It is necessary that Government should put these Corporations in the hands of people who have a sound economic knowledge and who will make it their national duty to make this a success.

PROF. N. R. MALKANI (Nominated): Sir, I want to have my say more or less as a free journalist. I have been so for the last 35 years; not a working journalist but a free journalist. Perhaps, my point of view also may have some value.

Sir, the more I look into this business, this industry, the more I find that this is a very complicated industry. I never knew that before. There are so many other organisations and institutions built round about the newspaper industry, horizontally and vertically. They are many, for example, the I.E.N.C., the A.B.C, the P.T.I., the Press Council, which will be called the P.C., the Press Institute which will be called the P.I., and so on. Each one of them has a function of its own; It is a complicated and difficult business. It is also a promising and a growing business, not a colossal business or a fraud, as some hon. friends said. It is neither colossal nor a fraud. It is a great adventure. It is a growing business and we should see to it that it grows. It has been growing very rapidly. I was here in 1934 and the circulation of the 'Hindustan Times' was about 3,000; today it is about 60,000. These papers are growing and growing very rapidly; yet, there is a great deal for them to grow up to. They are just growing; let us see that they are allowed to grow.

There is another big thing about this. This is an industry, but it is also a public utility with a public purpose to serve. It is the Fourth

Estate no doubt, but it is also an industry. Judiciary is not like that; it is a profession, a noble profession; the executive is not like that. The Legislature, I hope, is not like that too, though there is something of industry contaminating the elections to the legislatures. This is an industry, but it is getting to be more an industry than a public utility and that is where the danger comes in. The two are inter-linked but I hope they are not inter-locked. If we can separate them, then I would say, 'to the extent it is an industry, let there be a little more control. To the extent it is a public utility, let there be a little more and growing freedom'. It is a young child and a promising child. Allow it to grow into a young energetic man. To the extent it is a public utility, I will say, 'Allow it to grow. Take away the controls as far as possible.'

Sir, the Commission has made many recommendations; they are very comprehensive too. I wish they were less comprehensive than they are. In that case, the Commission could have done more justice to some other very important matters. I do believe that its recommendations about the P.T.I. or its recommendations about what is called the price-page Schedule would have been perhaps sounder, better, more impartial and more weighty if the Commission had more time.

Coming to the Press Council, I think it is the central and basic part of the recommendation. Take away the Press Council and one would think that the other recommendations would not have much value either. The Press Council has got seven functions, three of which are very important and we are tending to forget them. I think we had better keep them in mind. One of the functions is to build up a code in accordance with the highest professional standards; second is to keep under review any developments likely to restrict the supply and dissemination of news;

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third is to study developments in the Press, which may tend towards concentration or monopoly and so on. If we bear these in mind, then the other recommendations will be accepted or rejected by us or even held up by us keeping in view the existence of the Press Council.

I am satisfied with the composition of the Press Council. I do believe that it should be a public corporation, under the circumstances, the Press is not strong enough to have a corporation of its own. I am also happy that the Chief Justice of India is to nominate the Chairman, but I am not happy that the Chairman should be a High Court Judge. Why not nominate a professor or a principal? Why not have a great scholar or any distinguished man who is a public man and who enjoys public confidence. We are dealing with the Press, we are not dealing with the medical profession or the engineering profession or even with technology. We are dealing with public news and views about which there must be freedom, about which there must be imagination and understanding. I do believe, Sir, that there are many men outside the judicial profession who have that imagination, that intelligence and that integrity which we believe is the preserve of the High Court judges. I am, therefore, of opinion that this restriction is a little too much. Any public man having a long record of public service should be eligible for appointment as the Chairman.

So far as the composition is concerned, it is quite satisfactory. Most of them are working journalists, some of them are owners—but they too have an interest—and the rest are distinguished public men from the universities and so on. This is functional representation as even ours is not. It is very well composed and I have nothing to quarrel about.

Coming to the news agency, I have something to say and it is this. I

have been writing for the last 35 years and I like to write freely and I do write freely. Now and then, a line or a word in a paragraph is cut out but I have the pleasure and exhilaration of writing freely. Views must be expressed freely and news must be true. They must not be suppressed and distorted as they generally are. Our news agency must be a free agency, it must not be a public corporation. I personally protest against it because, in such circumstances it will not grow and it will be contaminated. Any control of any public body is bound to contaminate news, as it happens in totalitarian States. However small the control may be, there should be no control so far as news is concerned. There should be perfect freedom so far as news and views are concerned. But, on practical considerations, when I look into the working of the PTI then I say—though I am not intimately connected with it—I can say this. Three years ago it was not functioning well, it was not even ours. It was Reuters. After some time, it became ours but then the control of Reuters continued. It is our own only since the past three years. This is a short period but then I find that within three years, the Augean stables have been cleaned. It has changed the administration and has made several other changes. The Board of Directors consists of ten persons, five of whom represent the small papers. The PTI has settled with its employees on a very fair basis, it has given them fair wages which have been accepted by the employees. This is a considerable achievement. So far as shareholding is concerned, no one man has more than five votes. In all, there are 214 votes owned by 127 shareholders. A small newspaper can have its say, can come into the Board and form a majority on the Board if it wishes to do so. Even today as it is, there are five of them, if not five at least four, who are sitting to represent the small newspapers. You cannot say, therefore, that the Board is dominated by strong and big papers. There are as

many big papers represented as the small papers represented.

**SRI H. P. SAKSENA:** Who selected these five to represent small papers?

**PROF. N. R. MALKANI:** Their shareholders, as far as I know, and their shareholders are very few and as I said just now only about 127. It is growing, it is improving and realizing its own duties and it is a news agency which should be allowed to grow and become an international news agency. Government should give it every encouragement short of making it a public corporation, short of controlling it, short of subsidising it. Give it every other encouragement. It should buy its news for the A.I.R. at better rates. It should sell the cables and wireless services at a fairer rate and give them to it as cheaply as possible until it grows. If it does not grow, even then I would say it is not the Government but it is the function of the Press Council to see whether the P.T.I. is functioning properly or not and if it is not functioning properly suggest ways and means to review the situation. I do not think, to-day, the P.T.I. is in such a condition that it need to be converted into a public corporation.

The press is an industry and I find it said that it is grossly competitive. It has competitive power but it has competitive powers against whom? between themselves. The big paper fights another big paper. A big English paper fights another big English paper and a big language paper fights another big language paper. It does not fight a moffusil paper; it does not fight a district paper.

**PROF. G. RANGA:** Question.

**PROF. N. R. MALKANI:** Well, Sir, that is how I think of it. It is the district papers which compete among themselves and the big town papers compete among themselves. A language paper does not compete with an English paper nor an English paper with a language paper nor the big

paper with the small paper. Between themselves they fight and there is competition. There are cutthroat rates and cutthroat wages which should be stopped. We forget always that the small paper fails because of its inherent deficiencies, inherent weaknesses of management, of capital, of equipment, of editing, and many grow like mushrooms and go down the next morning. They come up at election time; dozens come into existence. After the elections are over they disappear. So the very small paper has a day of its own, lives for a day and goes out. We must see to it that its management is improved; its editorials are improved; its staff is improved. It is for the Press Council to have a press institute to train the people for these small papers and the small papers should be properly equipped and properly staffed.

Coming to the industrial side, I do feel that there is the great fear of concentration. It was practically spoken about by everyone of us that there is the great fear of concentration and it is to be stopped. Can it be stopped? I think we can take a number of measures to see that it is stopped and it should be stopped because it is an industry, working for profit and more than profit, working for influence, for insidious influence. I do not think there is much money in this press industry yielding high profits, but there is much influence subtle influence, undue influence and unfair influence. It is not that the big business-man puts money in the press because he makes only money out of it. It is because there is other business about which he wants to say something, and get other influences. It is that which has got, to my mind, to be taken notice of, not the money out of it but their influence. To-day, that influence is not much. To-day, they are not too big to be powerful; they are not too bad. But they can be powerful to make and unmake a Government. They can be too bad to contaminate influence, create a vicious atmosphere and give us bad

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news also. That should stop and I believe we have many ways of stopping them. I for one would like to break the chains and a paper in a chain should appear as a separate paper legally and financially so that it gets its news as if it were a separate paper, not in a chain. I would go further and say that all these what are called cross-word puzzles should be banned. They are being banned at present by a special legislation at some places—They are wrong and immoral. I would also say that if any supplements are issued they should be charged for, whatever the rate. It should not be gratis as it is being given at the present moment.

I would say that the Government, so far as its advertisements are concerned, should give the big papers less advertisements and the small papers more advertisements, more than they do at present. I would go further and say: Let the editors who have been losing ground for the last few years be made stable in their position by making them shareholders in the concern. To-day, in this industry, the business-man is the more important and not the editor, not the working journalist. To my mind to give more importance to the working journalist and to the editors is desirable; make each a shareholder and if he is a senior make him a director so that once the policy is laid down, the director directs, the editor edits and the shareholders see to it that the editor is in power and discharges his functions honestly and impartially and there is real partnership between the business-man on the one hand, the editor on the other and the working journalist on the third. They should be given the control too. And if all this does not succeed then claim the price-page. There is time left to do so. I would say: Give the Press Council the power to impose the price-page schedule if and when it thinks it necessary, not to-day. The power must be taken, but the power should not

be exercised now. In other cases you have taken the power which you have not exercised. Even when you do exercise it, it must be exercised with the knowledge and consent and advice of the Press Council. Otherwise the Press Council becomes only a name. Yet there is a case for the small paper as Professor Ranga says. There are very few small papers, I mean, mofussil papers, I mean, district papers, and they too can serve in their own fashion. They are good only for giving local news. They are not good for giving national news much less international news. They are not at all good for giving views. I do not take my views even from the big English dailies. I take them from the weeklies; I take them from the monthlies; I do not take them from the dailies;

PROF. G. RANGA: Where are the weeklies and monthlies?

PROF. N. R. MALKANI: They are there and I do read them. I read a daily, half a dozen weeklies and two or three monthlies, whenever I get time. My views are not to my mind formed by the dailies; they are formed by the weeklies.

The mofussil paper, the district paper requires encouragement and you can give it. How can you give it encouragement? Give it newsprint at a cheap rate. I learn that 40 per cent of the cost of preparing a paper is accounted for by the cost of the newsprint.

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: It is 45 per cent actually.

PROF. N. R. MALKANI: There you are. Therefore I would say, as Dr. Shrimati Seeta Parmanand was saying, that we should import paper from outside. We are also going to produce some 30,000 tons. Lump them together and make a pool and distribute it to all the papers at an equated rate and you will find that the local newspaper will be able to gain some advantage which we have never given them up till now. It is not the price-page schedule so much

as the newsprint which they get extremely dear. And there is also the advertisement. The Government has changed its policy and I congratulate the hon. Minister for having done it. They are giving more and more advertisements to the so-called small papers. This should be increased more and more. It should be 60 per cent to them and 40 per cent to the bigger ones. And keep the same rate as before. Do not lower the rates at all. And then remember that the small paper will never come into its own until the Press Council helps with proper editorial staff, managing staff etc.

DR. RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI: Giving of advertisements would depend on ...

PROF. N. R. MALKANI: I am just at the end of my speech. Sir, we should see to it that the smaller papers get the proper share. They have not got at the present moment. It is the duty of the Press Council to start the Press Institute to train editors, managers and so on for the smaller papers.

And above all, the small papers require a reading public. That means larger literacy. Unless we have mass literacy, unless we have basic education on a mass scale, you cannot expect people to read papers. So, it all depends on the standard of literacy. It is no use simply crying against the bigger papers. The people should be able to buy papers and read them. It is only then that the small papers will grow. The small papers do have a place but the price-page schedule is not the way to it. It is mass literacy and the provision of encouragement as I have said earlier that will help them.

I wish I had more time but I have none left to say anything more. I would only say that the recommendations of the Commission are very good. Some of them are excellent but all of them cannot be accepted and should not be accepted. Some of them should be implemented immediately; some should be rejected, the recommendation about the P.T.I. for instance

and some may be accepted and implemented later on as and when the time comes.

DR. P. V. KANE (Nominated): Mr. Vice-Chairman, in my somewhat long life I was never connected with the editorial or the management staff of any newspaper but I have been an ordinary reader of newspapers for a comparatively long time. I have been a reader of newspapers for over 60 years and I can only speak as a reader and as belonging to no party. Before I proceed further I should like respectfully to join in the tribute paid by several hon. Members to the Chairman of the Commission, the late Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha, for his industry, his tact and persuasiveness and for presenting almost a unanimous report except on a very small point.

Now, I am going to point out only two or three things. I have read the Report carefully and now that I come at the fag end of the debate, I do not feel I should take much time over these matters. The first thing that strikes me is that although, as I said, I have been reading newspapers for over sixty years, the progress in these sixty years has been rather slow in one direction. You will find from the figures supplied by the Commission that there are towns and cities in U. P., Madras and other places with over one lakh population but in which there is not a single daily paper. In Bombay Province itself in Khandesh, Satara, Thana, Ratnagiri and other places there is not a single daily. There are weeklies but no daily anywhere. Most of the dailies are found in the big cities like Bombay, Poona, Nagpur etc. And in some districts like Kolhapur there are one or two. This is a phenomenon which should be very carefully looked into. What is our object in looking into the state of our Press? It is a very great means of educating our masters as the Vice-Chairman said just now. We want a very good, intelligent democracy, not a democracy that will swallow anything like a herd of cattle. In order to achieve that end

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ours being a very young democracy, it behoves not only the Government but every one of us to look to the main object, that is, ultimately to have a good press that will place before the people all different angles from which a certain point, or a certain measure, or a certain act of Government can be looked at. We should therefore have a press which is most independent in its views and which is not going to have any truck with vested interests. If that is the aim, then certain other things will follow. When I began to read papers particularly in Marathi, there was not a single daily. Now there are 26. But what I found was the men who edited papers in the old days were fired by the patriotic ambition of bringing to an end our dependence or slavery, as they used to call it in those days, to a foreign power. Their object was emancipation and they were fired by high patriotic motives. Naturally, they were men of very high intellect—men like Agarkar, Surendranath and others. Now, it appears that somehow there is a falling off from those high ideals which people like Gokhale and others had. Now, it has become more or less a mercantile or a commercial undertaking. We need not bemoan that it has become so. We have to find out how we can get the best out of the circumstances in which we are placed today and from that point of view I find that our progress has been slow for two reasons.

Firstly, we are a very poor people and secondly we have very great illiteracy amongst us. I do not want to blame the planners but I should like to know whether in the next Five Year Plan or in the next one after that, in ten years to come, they are planning to make all children from six to ten or fourteen years literate. That is a point which should be planned properly. The first requirement of a democracy is that the people who have to vote and who have to select their representatives to this august Assembly must be able

to distinguish between different viewpoints and different policies and their repercussions on their lives. At present, there is nothing of the kind. The minority only is literate, the majority is illiterate. They cannot read; they cannot even put their signature. Therefore, the first concern of the planners should be, in my opinion, that they must see to it that within ten years there will not be a single person—as regards older men and adults I do not say anything of the age of 14 or 15, whether boy or girl, who will be illiterate. That is the first thing that the planners must do. Now, that is a digression. If you look at the figures, they are very small. You find that 330 newspapers have only a circulation of 25 lakhs, whereas in the U K and the United States you will find a single newspaper having 40 lakhs circulation, more than that for the whole of our country. In comparison, we look small because of these two reasons, namely, illiteracy and poverty. Nobody can purchase one or two papers. At the most, they can spend a pice or two on papers but no newspaper is available for that price now. The minimum I think is one anna at present. It will be Rs. 2 a month for one paper. For a man getting Rs. 35/- it is not possible to purchase a paper. How can he spend Rs. 2/- on it? And there are people who read newspapers either in the libraries or do not read at all. Therefore we must increase the readership. There must be some possibility of reaching a larger mass of people. At present, as circumstances are, we find that 15 owners own 50 per cent of the circulation of newspapers; that is what the Commission itself has said. We are approaching a point of monopolism. Probably we may find hereafter, if no proper steps are taken that 'here are going to be certain 25 or 30 persons who will manage the whole show and the poor little newspapers will practically go to the wall. For that purpose, two things are necessary. First, I will speak about the Press

Council and secondly about the price-page schedule. These are the only two points on which I should like to say something.

There are many things that one can say. But my time is restricted. As regards the Press Council, I have nothing to say except one or two things. I have no objection to there being 25 members. But I should say that the representation to working journalists seems small, as proposed by the Commission. There are going to be 25 members. There should be at least 18 journalists out of the above and they should be elected in the case of the Press Council. Let the journalists have a council of their own like the Bar Council or the Medical Council. But the analogy is not complete. The Bar Council is not an all-India institution. There are only Councils for States. But, supposing one day, the Bar Council is there, still the analogy will not be complete, because lawyers are officers of the court. Well, journalists are officers of their papers. Therefore, the analogy is not complete. But I should like to say that there should be at least 2/3 of journalists, the remaining 1/3 should be from among the proprietors and not university, but there will be institutes of journalism hereafter, and persons who are high in the public life of the country. Particularly important is the point that the Chairman must be a person who has the confidence not only of the journalists but also of the people. And I am submitting this that in the first place, for two or three years, the Chairman may be nominated by Government. Thereafter, the Chairman should also be elected and he should be elected on the model of the Vice-Chancellor of a university. That is, the Syndicate or Senate make a panel of two or three people from among themselves, the Chancellor selects one from that panel. Similarly for the first two or three years, I have no objection to Government nominating anybody like that who is quite fit for the purpose. But, there-

after, it must be more or less this Press Council which should be left to propose from among themselves or if there are eminent people outside a panel should be made from among whom Government should be bound to select one. That is one thing to which I particularly draw your attention. I hope that the Minister will think over this matter. I do not know whether anybody else has suggested this thing. But this is what I feel.

Then, as regards the price-page schedule, I have found that I am in a somewhat difficult position. I find arguments both for and against; and as a common man, a man of some experience for 45 years dealing with people as a lawyer, I come to think that the price-page schedule is the proper thing to introduce. There may be certain restrictions put upon it. But as I said our goal is that as large a number of people should be reached by the press either in English, Hindi or any regional languages. Supposing people attain complete literacy in ten years, they should be reached by newspapers so that they are the greatest instrument of education. Therefore, if the proper voting strength is our goal, then the small papers must live. Otherwise, the big fish will swallow the small fish. Therefore, in order that the small newspapers who cannot afford a large capital can have a large number of people on their rolls and reach every voter in the nook and corner of the country, papers in the regional languages must not be allowed to be swamped by the larger people. They should be able to hold their own and for this purpose, I think this price-page schedule is the proper thing. Nobody has absolute freedom and the press also cannot claim absolute freedom. It is the law. Nobody has complete freedom in this world. Freedom is always restricted. The question is whether the restriction is reasonable or not, and therefore, in the higher interests of millions upon millions of people, it would be proper to say that restrictions

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should be put. There should be a certain maximum of pages and we should get down the rate. They have suggested one pie per one page. I know nothing of these matters. These must be left to the Government and the people who have experience of this. But I should say that there must be some restriction about bigger people being able to put down the small paper.

Then, I find that the Commission says that 60,000 tons of newsprint are required and you produce none. So, from that point of view also, there should be rationing. We should not send money abroad and we must try to have newsprint of our own, if possible.

Another point is that the newspapers take up all things which are worthless. I find even the big papers publish this "What the stars tell you". So, many people must be looking into their stars. But what is there? There is nothing. They generally say "from December 21 to January 21". There are twelve months and supposing the readers are about 1,50,000. Dividing this by twelve, 12,500 people will have the same fate according to the paper. That is the way in which things are being done. Therefore, I say that such a thing should not be allowed. If they want to cater to the astrological needs of the people, let them start astrological magazines and the people may consult them. Measures are also taken to stop Cross-word puzzles practically, or put Rs. 1,000 as the maximum prize.

The other day, I read in some newspaper that the value of it as waste paper is great because it has more readers than any other paper and it is giving more pages. If there is the price-page schedule, it will check this. People buy the paper and they can also take some money back after reading by selling the old paper. I am in favour of this price-page schedule.

These are the only things that I wanted to convey.

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, I also wish to join in the chorus of tributes that have been paid to the work of the Press Commission, particularly to that of its chairman who is unfortunately no more with us. There has been some amount of criticism about the delay in taking the Press Commission Report into consideration. Well, I wish to congratulate the hon. Minister for putting the Report expeditiously before the Parliament and my reason is simply this. At about the same time, another very important Committee—it was the Textile Enquiry Committee—was constituted. That was in 1952, and that also submitted its report about the same time, in July 1954. But I have not heard of it or of what has happened to it, whether it has gone to cold storage or whether it is still in hibernation, I simply do not know. This Press Commission Report has had a favourable reception. Far from trying to complain about the delay, I should congratulate the hon. Minister for the expedition with which he has come before us. This is a great document, I should say, worthy of the great country and whether it is a big or a small press, I think here is a text to go by and they can always look to it for guidance and, I may add, inspiration.

This Report has evoked a lot of interest, I must say, after it has been published. If it had evoked the same interest at the time of the enquiry, possibly it would have been better, because I find that out of about 255 Ministers of the Central Government and State Governments, including Parliamentary Secretaries, not one had taken the trouble of answering the questionnaire. The Vice-Chancellors of the Universities; not one of them had cared to take notice of this questionnaire and answer it. And I think the M.Ps. have done a bit better, because out of 670 M.Ps. three have answered, and out of 1,015 M.L.As. and M.L.Cs., four have answered. So, Sir, here is something for us to reflect.



I am afraid I should not be going into the details. Let me go straight into the main thing on which I find there has been absolute, perfect unanimity, and that is with regard to the service conditions of the working journalists. On this question I do not think there has been a single voice which has sounded a dissentient note; and I believe, the Government also has already made up its mind to accept the recommendations of the Commission. Therefore, I think it would not be necessary for me to harp on this subject any more. I entirely agree with all my hon. friends who have said that this is a matter which should be implemented early and given the topmost priority. At the same time, I feel like agreeing with some of the hon. speakers who expressed a doubt as to the possible effect that the fixation of a minimum wage and the provision of various other amenities would have on the small language papers. I find in one city, which I know very well and from which I hail, there are about 8 to 10 quarter anna papers. I just would like to know, I would like anybody to tell me, whether these quarter anna papers in a mofussil station could ever manage to pay its employees, the working journalists, at the rate recommended by the Commission. Sir, I have a solution for this. Certain hon. Members \* said—I do not know whether Prof. Malkani joined in that—that it does not matter if the small papers go out of existence. I cannot be so harsh on the small journalists, because if any district or mofussil station is to have any language paper, it cannot be of the size of the big language papers printing thirty, forty and fifty thousand copies. It can only be a few hundreds. The appendices here—I think No. V—show the kind of journals we have got. The circulation is between 500 and possibly 2,000 or 3,000. Such journals cannot be expected to pay at the rate recommended by the Commission. Sir, my suggestion is a very simple one. In

such cases, where the minimum wage cannot be paid, in the nature of things, it would be better for us to recognize any agreement that the management and the employees could come together to and we should not, in those cases, insist upon the payment of minimum wages. I am only saying this—not that I am against the minimum wages being paid—because of the simple fact that if the paper closes, a large number of people will be thrown out of employment. After all when we are planning, especially with regard to the next Five Year Plan, we are thinking more in terms of solving unemployment; and judged from that point of view, these small journals not only play a very important part in educating the people round about the districts, but also, to a great extent, in solving the question of unemployment.

Then, Sir, I wish to say a word or two on the subject of yellow journalism. I was surprised to find my friend, Shri Mahanty, putting up a plea—almost it looked to me—in favour of yellow journalism. I do not know whether all my friends know exactly how this term “yellow journalism” came into existence. I have done a slight research work in this respect and I find that one Mr. Joseph Pulitzer, who was a very adventurous journalist in America and who lived between 1847-1911, purchased a paper known as “The World”. And in order to increase the circulation, he resorted to this sensational writing. At about the same time, there was one Mr. William Randolph Hearst who had another morning journal. There was severe competition between the two. The adoption of sensationalism had increased four-fold the circulation of “The World”. So, Mr. Randolph Hearst tried the same thing and there was what is known as the war of “Yellow Kid” comics and the sensationalism of both newspapers was responsible for the term “yellow journalism”. Now, Sir, I am in entire agreement with the observations of the Press Commission that the news

[Shri H. C. Dasappa.] world, the journalistic world, the editorial world, has not as yet taken up sufficiently a tirade against this kind of journalism in the land and adopted any effective means to check that kind of journalism. I see from the evidence that they have all been in a way speaking against it. But from what I see here, the Commission feels that they have not done enough to eradicate this kind of objectionable thing in Indian journalism. I read from para 942 of the Report where they say: "Here too, the associations of editors and journalists have done little to condemn their colleagues either within their organisations or in their writings in the press." That is, about yellow journalism, indecency and vulgarity. It is very necessary, if we should ever try to build up our press on sound lines and keep up the reputation that we have earned during all these years, that we must see that what is known as "yellow journalism" is absolutely effaced from the press world.

5 P.M.

I will only quote one other view in this matter. The evil effects are well stated in the book "The Press and Society", edited by George L. Bird and Frederick E. Merwin. Quoting Thomas on Yellow Journal, they say:

"It is a positive agent of vice and crime. The condition of morality as well as of mental life in a community depends on the prevailing copies. A people is profoundly influenced by whatever is persistently brought to its attention. A good illustration of this is the fact that an article of commerce—a food, a luxury, a medicine or a stimulant can always be sold in immense quantities if it be persistently and largely advertised. In the same way, the yellow journal by an advertisement of crime, vice and vulgarity on a scale unexampled in commercial advertising and in a way that amounts to approval and even

applause becomes one of the forces making for immorality."

Therefore, Sir, I think the necessity of trying to combat this evil is very great and as they have observed that it is on the increase, though confined to certain sections of the journalists. We must take every measure to stop it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): It is time—only two more minutes.

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: It is more easily said that these bigger journals are coming in the way of the smaller journals. I am afraid that the vocation or objectives of the two sets of journals should be different. One cannot, by any stretch of imagination, compete with the other for the obvious reason that according to the figures that they have given, we find that the capital investment for a daily in the English language would be Rs. 17,85,050 and if it is a language paper, it would be Rs. 12,30,000 but if a language paper combines with English, it will reduce it by another Rs. 12 lakhs and it will only be about Rs. 19 lakhs. Now which of the smaller papers can ever imagine to compete with these bigger papers and therefore we must adopt the other means of trying to give them newsprint at the same cost at which the bigger journals get it and also the service of news agencies and others at a much cheaper cost. How it has got to be done is a thing which is not very difficult because if they could only pool the various items of expenditure, that will come into the catering of urban and rural areas, it will be possible for us to work out the ratio. Then, I would like to have a word or two with regard to the news agencies. I am inclined to agree with my hon. friend Shri Kunzru on this question. The agencies no doubt are one of the most important factors in the dissemination of news not only in the country but also outside but I am of the opinion that there should be no

question of control by any other authority, much less by Government in regard to the provision of these facilities. It must be let entirely to the press to organise themselves in such a manner as to be most effective in this regard. The whole history of news agencies, whether of America or U.K. or any other State, only goes to prove what I have now put forward. I would not like any day a news agency of India to be modelled on the Tass Agency of Russia and therefore I feel that it would not be after all proper for us to plump into a public corporation so far as news agencies are concerned. I must say that the idea there—as the proposal goes to show—that 50 per cent. of the people who should be on that Board should be non-news people—I cannot conceive of a thing like that unless it be a move towards totalitarianism and besides, as the hon. Minister Dr. Keskar has said in the other House I think, it is a matter left entirely for a body which is autonomous and it will not be possible for the Government to interfere with their own arrangements which are on a cooperative basis.....

PROF. G. RANGA: Any corporation is not going to be a hand-maid of the Government. It is going to be an autonomous body.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): You had five minutes more. Shrimati Lakhanpal.

SHRIMATI CHANDRAVATI LAKHANPAL (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, the report of the Press Commission has dealt with various items.....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN: (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): I would like to mention for the benefit of hon. Members that there are seven more speakers. So, I will allot 8 minutes to each of them.

SHRIMATI CHANDRAVATI LAKHANPAL: 8 minutes is very little. I would request you to make it 10 minutes at least because I have

been waiting for such a long time. I was to be called at 2.30 and now it is past five.

I would like to confine my observations only to two points which are very important. The first is regarding price-page schedule and the other is service condition of working journalists. Much has been said about the price-page schedule. It is being recommended with a view to eliminating unfair competition and it is believed that it will achieve two good results. The growth of the smaller and medium-sized papers and the second is the breaking up of monopolist combines and chains of newspapers. I submit that both these objects are very dear to us and near to our heart but I fail to appreciate the line of argument which is adopted in order to achieve this object. I am in perfect agreement with Prof. Malkani when he said that the price-page schedule is not going to solve the problem of medium-sized papers. It will not improve in any way the conditions of small or medium-sized papers. Let us take a concrete example. Supposing the Hindustan Times of Delhi is forced to increase its price under the price control, I fail to understand how that increase is going to benefit in any way the growth or the development of the small-sized papers? The fact is obvious. The reason is that there is no competition worth the name between an all-India paper and a district level paper. There can be competition between two papers which belong to the same category but there can be no competition at all between two papers which belonged to two different categories and therefore I submit that except the price-page schedule, we shall have to look to other methods of improving the condition of these medium-sized papers. There are other factors which were referred to by Prof. Malkani which are responsible for the backwardness of these papers and one of them I would say is the indifference of Government which is shown by giving scant

[Shrimati Chandravati Lakhanpal.] attention to them by way of distribution of Government advertisements. I say, it is their inability sometimes to secure a fair proportion and a due proportion of Government advertisement which is responsible for their economic backwardness. Therefore I say that it is not the price-page schedule which is going to solve their problem but it is the Government protection, the patronage of the Government which will help them and go a long way in improving their condition. Besides that, with regard to breaking up of the monopolies and the combines of newspapers, there is no denying the fact that it is very important and it should be done, but I would say that it would be more effective and much better if we hit at the problem direct and not go on beating about the bush.

Sir, Parliament is competent enough to frame a law which would ban ownership of more than one paper by one individual at a time and I may add that such laws do exist in some of the western advanced countries, in France, for instance. Therefore, leaving alone the price-page schedule, it would be better if we tackled this problem by striking at the root of the evil and not in any indirect manner. Besides, if we look at the question of price-page schedule, from the point of view of the reading public, it might do even harm to the reading public, because with higher prices, the lesser will be the number of subscribers and so a fair proportion of the reading public would be deprived of the benefits of newspapers. And, we also know that it is the newspaper, it is the press which is the chief organ of educating public opinion and it is on educated public opinion that the future of our new-born democracy rests.

I will next go to the other subject, namely, that of the working journalists. Much has been said about this subject in the debate here in this House. There is no denying the fact that the service conditions of the

working journalists are very unsatisfactory and there is no other country anywhere in the world where the working journalists have been reduced to such a low and humiliating status as here in India. And yet, the fact remains that he is the pillar of this industry and it is on his sweated labour that the industry of journalism is flourishing today. There are people who want to solve this problem from the point of view of labourers or rather on the basis that they are also labourers. I submit that a working journalist is not a labourer. His problem has to be solved, on a higher level, on the basis of the nobility of the profession, for after all, he is not an ordinary labourer. He is a noble teacher of humanity and his is the noble mission of enlightening the mind of the public and of educating the opinion of the world. In his hands lies the future of democracy. Therefore, I submit that to treat him like a labourer, to bring him within the purview of the Industrial Disputes Act or the Minimum Wages Act would be doing a gross injustice to him, almost an insult to the noble profession that he belongs to. Therefore, my suggestion is that there must be a comprehensive legislation dealing with all the problems connected with the working journalist, not only with regard to his wages, but also about his provident fund, bonus and all the rest of it. He has to be guaranteed a minimum wage, but we have to see that he is not only put above want, but he is provided with a decent standard of life, a standard befitting the dignity of his profession. Therefore, to bring a comprehensive legislation, to solve all the problems connected with the working journalists, is the least that we can do, if we want to raise the status of his profession.

Sir, before resuming my seat, I would like to bring to your notice the glaring disparity that exists between the pay-scales of the news-editors of English newspapers and those of the language papers. I would submit that the news-editors in English papers have to work much less than those in

the language papers, because in the English papers they get the news well edited, they get ready-made news, so to say, whereas the news-editors in the language papers have to work very hard in translating the English news into Hindi and other languages and arranging it all in columns. Yet it is the language news-editor who gets much less than the other. This anomaly of less pay and more work has to be removed immediately if we want to serve and promote the cause of our national and regional languages. Sir, this disparity cannot be tolerated in a society which aims at a socialistic pattern of life.

With these observations, I would conclude. I am in full agreement with the Report of the Press Commission, especially the recommendations regarding the working journalists, with the slight difference that I have indicated, relating to the price-page schedule.

**श्री गोपीकृष्ण विजयवर्गीय :** उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, आज जब श्रीमती लखनपाल ने अंग्रेजी में भाषण दिया तो मैंने सोचा कि मैं भी अंग्रेजी में बोलूँ, लेकिन श्रीमती मुंशी हिन्दी में बोल चुकी हैं, इस लिये मैंने हिन्दी में ही बोलना मुनासिब समझा।

प्रेस कमीशन की स्थापना के विषय में और उसकी रिपोर्ट के विषय में सबने प्रशंसा की है। मैं भी उसमें शामिल हूँ। यह उचित ही है कि हमको एक ऐसे प्रेस की आवश्यकता है, ऐसे अखबारों की आवश्यकता है, जो सच्चाई को जाहिर करें, निष्पक्ष हों, निष्पक्ष हों। ऐसे प्रेस को बढ़ाने के लिये और उनमें काम करने वाले जो श्रमकर्ता पत्रकार हैं, उनकी स्थिति सुधारने के लिये गवर्नमेंट उचित कदम उठा रही है। इस लिये गवर्नमेंट का भी मैं इस विषय में अभिनन्दन करता हूँ। हमारे माननीय मंत्री डा० कैमकर साहब ने सन् १९४७ में ही इस विषय पर रोशनी डाली थी जैसा कि मिसजे लक्ष्मी मेनन ने एक अखबार की कटिंग से

पढ़ करके सुनाया। उनका इस ओर पहले से ध्यान है कि पत्रकारों की स्थिति सुधारनी चाहिये और वे बहुत समय से पत्रकारों से सहानुभूति रखते हैं। दोनों सदनों में मेम्बर ने इस रिपोर्ट का समर्थन किया है। इस लिये मैं समझता हूँ कि इन सिफारिशों को कार्यान्वित करने के लिये जो सपोर्ट गवर्नमेंट को या मिनिस्टर साहब को चाहिये वह उन्हें मिल गई है। और जैसा कि यहां कई सदस्यों ने कहा अब यह गवर्नमेंट का कर्तव्य हो जाता है कि वह इन सिफारिशों पर अमल करें। लोगों को गवर्नमेंट से बहुत आशाएं हैं और उनकी पूर्ति जल्दी ही होनी चाहिये। थोड़ी बहुत अगर देर हो, किसी से कंसल्टेशन वगैरह करने की जरूरत हो तो वह किया जाय। लेकिन जहां तक हो सके कमीशन की जो सिफारिशें हैं उनको जल्दी ही कार्यान्वित किया जाय।

जो विवादास्पद प्रश्न हैं उन्हीं पर रोशनी डालना ठीक होगा क्योंकि समय बहुत कम है। मिनिमम वेज के बारे में और पत्रकारों की स्थिति सुधारने के बारे में मैं यह सिफारिश करूंगा कि इस रिपोर्ट में जो एक मिनिमम वेज के विषय में नक्शा दिया गया है, उसी को गवर्नमेंट मुनासिब समझे। इस नक्शे में क्लास थर्ड के विषय में टोटल है १५० रु०, क्लास सेकेंड के विषय में टोटल है १७५ रु०, क्लास फर्स्ट (बी) के विषय में टोटल है २०० रु०, और क्लास फर्स्ट (ए) के विषय में टोटल है २२५ रु० और इसमें बेसिक वेज, हाई कास्ट आफ लिविंग और डियरनेस एलाउंस भी शामिल है। मेरे खयाल से यह स्केल ठीक होगा और यदि इसे कानूनन मुकर्रर कर दिया जाय तो इसमें कोई हर्ज नहीं होगा। क्योंकि बैंक एवार्ड वगैरह के मामले में गवर्नमेंट ने बैंक कर्मचारियों को मजदूरों से अलग ट्रीट किया है। जो श्रमकर्ता पत्रकार हैं वह मजदूरों की हिसयत से बहुत काफी ऊंचा है। वह श्रम भी करता है लेकिन वह देश के लिये नये विचार देता है, नई रोशनी देता है। इस लिये उसको कुछ ज्यादा मिले तो इसमें कोई

[श्री गोपीकृष्ण विजयवर्गीय]

बुराई की बात नहीं हैं। इस विषय में रीजनल बोर्ड वगैरह बना कर के कुछ दूरी लगाना या उनको और किसी तरह से असुविधा में डालना मैं मनासिब नहीं समझता हूँ। रीजनल बोर्डों की कोई जरूरत नहीं है बल्कि उनके लिये अलग से कानूनन वेंज मुकदर कर देना चाहिये।

कमीशन ने जो बातें बतलाई हैं, जिन पर रोशनी डाली है, वे आखें खोलने वाली हैं। २२० पत्र हैं और २५ लाख उनके खरीददार हैं, लेकिन इसमें मिलित्वयत का केंद्रीकरण हो गया है। कंसंट्रेशन आफ ओनरशिप पर हर एक मंम्बर ने रोशनी डाली है इसलिये इस विषय पर मुझे और कुछ नहीं कहना है। प्राइस-पेज शेंड्यूल का जो विचार है वह भी मुझे पसन्द आता है, हालांकि कुछ दूसरे वक्ताओं ने कहा है कि यह कुछ अच्छा नहीं होगा। मैं नहीं समझ सका कि मलकानी साहब ने यह कैसे कहा कि इससे कोई फायदा नहीं होगा। वह तो खादी के समर्थक हैं और छोटें छोटें उद्योग धंधों के मानने वाले हैं, सदा उनका दृष्टिकोण उधर ही गया है। तो आज प्रेस का जो उद्योग है वह भी मैकेंनाइज्ड हो रहा है और लाखों-करोड़ों रूपयों से खड़ा किया जा रहा है। बड़े बड़े अखबारों के कम्प्यूटीशन में डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स में और दहातों में, छोटें अखबार पनप नहीं पाते हैं। इसलिये यदि हम हिन्दी की पत्रकारिता को सुधारना चाहते हैं और दूसरे लैंग्वेज पेंपर्स को बढ़ाना चाहते हैं और उनको डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स में और दहातों में पहुंचाना चाहते हैं तो वह उस वक्त तक नहीं हो सकता है जब तक कि जनता की तरफ से भी कुछ सैक्रीफाइस न हों। जैसे कि खादी महंगी पड़ती है फिर भी हमें खादी खरीदनी चाहिये, क्योंकि उसको गरीब लोग उत्पादित करते हैं उसी प्रकार से अगर दशे अखबारों को बढ़ाना है और डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स में पब्लिक लाइफ को सुधारना है, तो यदि प्राइस-पेज शेंड्यूल के अनुसार कुछ ज्यादा पैसे भी

लग जायें तो भी कोई हर्जा नहीं है। उसके अनुसार पत्रकारिता को बढ़ाने से फायदा ही होगा, ऐसा मेरा विचार है। इस विषय में जो दलील दी गई है उससे तो हम अखबार की कंपिटलाइज्ड इंडस्ट्री को, मैकेंनाइज्ड इंडस्ट्री की और पूंजीपतियों की ही ज्यादा मदद करेंगे और छोटें छोटें अखबारों की मदद नहीं करेंगे। इसलिये मेरा खयाल है कि प्राइस-पेज शेंड्यूल की इस स्कीम को अगर गवर्नमेंट मंजूर कर ले तो अच्छा रहेगा।

प्रेस काउंसिल का सुभाव भी बहुत अच्छा है और वह मंजूर होना चाहिये। प्रेस रजिस्ट्रार वगैरह भी कायम होने चाहिये।

पी० टी० आई०, यू० पी० आई० और खबर एजेंसियों के विषय में जरूर मैं कुछ कहना चाहता हूँ। यह बड़े ही खेद की बात है कि हिन्दुस्तान का दुनिया में इतना नाम हो गया है, लेकिन वर्ल्ड से न्यूज कलेक्ट करने का अभी तक कोई मुनासिब इंतजाम नहीं है। दीवान चमनलाल ने अभी बताया कि हिन्दुस्तान से बाहर इस पी० टी० आई० का कोई नाम ही नहीं जानता और न कोई अच्छा इंतजाम ही है कि बाहर से न्यूज इकट्ठी हो सके। विदेशों में हमारी न्यूज एजेंसियां कायम होनी चाहियें और आर्गेनाइज होनी चाहियें और इसकी भी बड़ी जरूरत है कि हिन्दुस्तान में भी निष्पक्ष न्यूज मिल सके, वगैरह क्लर के, वगैरह रंग दिये हूयें। इस विषय में मैं कुछ ज्यादा राय जाहिर नहीं कर सकता कि पी० टी० आई० और यू० पी० आई० की स्थिति कैसी है और इनका कार्पोरेशन बन जाना चाहिये या नहीं लेकिन पब्लिक इंटरस्ट में अगर जरूरी हो तो कार्पोरेशन बनाना भी अच्छा है, हालांकि कमीशन ने इनके शेयर होल्डर्स पर यह बात छोड़ी है। बहरहाल, ऐसी न्यूज एजेंसीज होनी चाहियें जो कि दुनिया की न्यूज कलेक्ट कर सकें और हिन्दुस्तान में भी अच्छी तरह से काम कर सकें। इसके लिये अगर गवर्नमेंट को लास भी उठाना पड़े तो भी इन न्यूज एजेंसीज को सबसिडी या

लाने वगैरह देने चाहिये और दूसरी सुविधायें भी देने चाहियें। यदि टेलीप्रिंटर्स, तार के और वायरलेस के रेट्स वगैरह में कोई सुविधा करनी हो तो वह भी की जानी चाहिये। इसके अतिरिक्त यदि हिन्दुस्तान में २, ३, ४ न्यूज एजेंसीज हों जो कि आपस में कम्पिटिशन करें तो कोई बुरी बात नहीं है लेकिन उनको बहुत अच्छे बेसिस पर चलाने की जरूरत है।

**THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN):** Nearly time.

**श्री गोपीकृष्ण विजयवर्गीय :** मैं बहुत जल्दी खत्म करता हूँ। इसके अलावा स्टेट ऑन्ड न्यूज प्रिंट प्रोडक्शन के विषय में भी कमीशन ने सिफारिश की है, तो उसके विषय में गवर्नमेंट प्रयत्न कर ही रही है। क्रासवर्ड पब्लिश वगैरह जो निकलते हैं उनको भी खत्म करने की जरूरत है और उन पर प्रतिबन्ध लगाया जाना चाहिये। गवर्नमेंट इसके लिये भी प्रयत्नशील है। इसी तरह से एडवर्टीजमेंट की पालिसी के विषय में भी गवर्नमेंट योग्य निर्णय लेगी ऐसा मेरा खयाल है। गवर्नमेंट पहले ही घोषित कर चुकी है कि ज्यादातर मसलों में वह बहुत शीघ्र ही कुछ न कुछ करने वाली है और उसके लिये जो बिल और कानून जरूरी हैं वे पेश किये जायेंगे। अतः आम तौर पर, सामान्यतः इस रिपोर्ट का मैं समर्थन करता हूँ और अभिनन्दन करता हूँ। इसको मैं देश के लिये एक बहुत ही कीमती डाक्यूमेंट समझता हूँ। धन्यवाद।

**SHRI H. P. SAKSENA:** To the authors of the Press Commission, rich and glowing, due and well-merited tribute has been paid from all directions. I say that the recommendations should be decided only by one acid test and it is this: Whether it guarantees or does not guarantee the freedom of the press. If the recommendations, taken as a whole, guarantee the freedom of the press, I welcome them; but the *sine qua non* of a free press itself is total freedom from external control, even Govern-

ment control. Those recommendations which do not pass out of this test are, in my estimation, not worthy of welcome. My study of the recommendations, however, convinces me that the recommendations do give us complete freedom from extraneous control.

The crying need of the working journalists, whom I have had the privilege of consulting, is that the recommendations of the Press Commission—whatever they are, whether they fulfil their demands in full, cent per cent, or not—should be implemented in their entirety. This is their first and foremost demand and I hope that the Government which claims to be a responsible Government, responsive to the needs of the people, will see to it that the recommendations are implemented in their entirety—and are not taken singly, one by one—as soon as possible. In this context, I wholeheartedly support the amendment of my hon. friend Mr. Gopinath Singh, barring, of course, the words 'immediately and expeditiously', because these words cannot be used in the context of Governmental activities, especially in the case of a complex and intricate proposition like this. I certainly recommend that the recommendations should be implemented as early as possible.

I am wholeheartedly in favour of the price-page schedule by resorting to which you can give a fairly long lease of life to the small newspapers which are the outcome and the result of individual enterprise, individual and ambitious ventures on the part of highly educated and literary persons who eventually became journalists like Mr. Gopinath Singh.

Similarly and identically, newsprint control is a desideratum which the small newspapers cannot live. They must be given sufficient newsprint for the use of their papers; otherwise, they will neither succeed in competing with the big newspapers nor shall they ever be in a position to do that.

[Shri H. P. Saksena.]

Then, Sir, remuneration of the working journalist which is the crux of the whole matter is a thing that should receive the first and foremost consideration of the Government. Without waiting for anything whatsoever, they should prepare a scale and give their final consent and assent to that scale and it should be the duty of the Government to do it. It should not be postponed to be done by any other agency or any other organisation and then this scale that has been recommended in the recommendations of the Press Commission should be raised up; it should be lifted. It is not sufficient in these days of scarcity, in these days of the prices soaring high in each and every direction. It is not this scale that can keep the working journalist live contented and happy. Give them a living wage by all means or put them to death, the whole of them. There are martyrs here. I am a martyr. My friend, Mr. Rama Rao is a martyr. Most of us have suffered and suffered at the hands of these newspaper magnates and we hear some are roaming in the streets; others have got no business to do. So if you want to prepare a casualty list of the journalists, it will give you a very big volume of casualties. That should be put a stop to and the scale that you prepare, it may be one scale, it may be two or three scales; that is of course open to you to decide, but then there should be a scale and each working journalist must be given a living wage.

Then, so far as the other recommendations of the Press Commission are concerned, I endorse almost all of them. Now, for instance, there is the constitution of the Press Council. I would suggest one thing and it is this that it should consist mainly of the working journalists. Of course I do not say that it should entirely consist of working journalists, but if it is to be a council of 25 members, let 20 members be from the working journalists; five including the chairman or excluding him even should be from other spheres of life, but then twenty

must come from the working journalists.

Then, Sir, there is the burning question of advertisements, who should get the advertisements from the Government and who should not? Now I have got a very easy and simple solution for this and it is this. All Government advertisements, if they are not of very great importance, should be published in the mofussil newspapers and then if they are of some importance for the cities also, they should be published in the State newspapers, and then only the advertisements of all-India importance should be published in all-India newspapers. I cannot understand how is it that five or six pages of the 'Hindustan Times' are full of advertisements, and the paper consists of twelve pages. Why should they be published in the 'Hindustan Times' alone, or in the 'Statesman' alone? I cannot understand why it is so, why the 'Hindustan Times' or any other newspaper of that dimension should have any priority in that respect.

Then, Sir, one of the grievances of the working journalists is that advance copies of Governmental documents are not given to them in proper time.....

PROF. G. RANGA: For study.....

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA:.....in order to enable them to get them composed and made up for next day's publication. Leave study alone, Prof. Ranga. Now, they should get them sufficiently in advance in order to be able to publish them in time. This has always been the case even during the British times. This has always been the purpose of giving advance copies to the newspaper-man.

Sir, there are two important news agencies in our country to-day. One is the P.T.I. and the other the U.P.I. Most of us perhaps know the background and the history of both of these organisations. The U.P.I. has been a nationalistic news agency; it



has suffered and suffered for the sake of the freedom of the country. It has always stood by us hand in hand in our struggle and it needs and deserves the entire sympathy, subsidy and assistance from the Government in order to be able to live. It would be a dark day for India if this useful, helpful and national organisation is allowed to be sacrificed at the altar of bigger news agencies like the P.T.I. So far as the U.P.I. is concerned, I recommend its case for the careful examination of the Government and hope that it will be allowed to live and lead a useful life. Now if it suits the purposes of the Government, the two news organisations may be merged, with of course the U.P.I. as the supreme partner. The name I do not mind but the U.P.I. should be the supreme partner, and of course the 'Hindustan Samachar' in the regional language, in Hindi, which is after all, whether you like it or not, the national language of the country. is to be continued.

Now I am in a hurry; it is like a mail train running; so.....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): Yes, you are nearing your time.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: Thank you very much. Now we are thinking of making some public corporation. Yes, make it a public corporation or a private corporation; give it any name you please. It will be your child, and you are perfectly at liberty to give it any beautiful name you please, but then the purpose for which it is to be made is the purpose of service to the people, and the service should be uncontaminated, selfless and national. These are the conditions under which that service will have to be discharged.

Now, Sir, so far as the charges of these news agencies are concerned, they are in a sense prohibitive. I do not understand why it should be in 17 hundreds and 12 hundreds and 6

hundreds even. Nothing like that. Let there be a minimum fixed. You may give a summary or an abridged edition of the news, but it should be not more than a hundred rupees for small and district newspapers: not more than a hundred; I am very serious about the figure that I am giving. From Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, and from Lucknow and Allahabad even, you may charge from the dailies twice the amount but not from small places like Bulandshahr, Sitapur, Gonda and Bahraich, and you should not charge more than a hundred rupees. Otherwise, if you continue your old rates, nobody will purchase your news. And then you are stifling the growth of local newspapers in the districts of the country. There are so many hundreds of districts in our country—and I was going to tell you towards the end of my speech which I am telling you just now—that each *tehsil* in our country must have a newspaper, even though it is sold for four pice, even though it contains four pages only, a small size paper, but then every *tehsil* will develop and cultivate the habit of reading newspapers in the rural people and it will be an innovation and a new thing in their life to be presented with a daily newspaper each morning and that will inculcate in them the national habits. Unfortunately, Sir, you know that nationalism as such for people to be able to be ready to die for their country has not developed in our country and I earnestly desire that that feeling must be created so that when I die I die with the happiness and assured conviction that my country is not going to be enslaved again when I am gone. Let us create a generation in which the idea of freedom will be uppermost.

With that end in view, I strongly recommend that each and every *tehsil* should have a newspaper of its own; in the regional language of course, not in Hindi.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): It is time.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: Within a few minutes I will finish, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): I have given you five minutes extra. Mr. Gupta.

SHRI B. M. GUPTE (Bombay): Sir, I support the recommendation of the Press Commission with regard to the improvement of the condition of the working journalists, the price-page schedule and also the establishment of the Press Council. But rising at the fag end of a long debate, I do not wish to go over the same ground again. I should like to touch a new subject, namely, the recommendations about the Press law. I am referring to this aspect not only because it is new but in my opinion it has a direct bearing on the freedom of the press which is of vital importance to our infant democracy. I am afraid that this subject is being neglected by this House and I am surprised that even the press has been silent and in all the discussions that have been going on on the Report of the Commission, they have not taken up this matter. Perhaps it is not regarded as very urgent;—and I also concede that—because after the amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code this matter has not remained as urgent as it was earlier. But simply because it is not urgent, it does not cease to be important and I say that the Government should not neglect it. They should take it up for consideration. Various suggestions have been made by the Commission. The Commission has thought it fit to refer to this matter. Therefore, it should not be neglected. I shall touch on one or two of the suggestions that have been made.

Perhaps it may be thought that now that the Law Commission has been appointed, it will deal with all these things and that they need not be taken up now. I submit, Sir, that it is a wrong notion. There are certain recommendations which do not come under the purview of the Law Commission. The suggestion about

section 124A of the Indian Penal Code might go to the Law Commission because it will be the duty of the Law Commission to bring up all the enactments in consonance with the Constitution. But there are certain items for which new provision has to be made and to make a new provision of law is the function of Parliament and not of the Law Commission.

I submit that the recommendation about the protection that is to be given to reporters with regard to the reporting of the proceedings of Parliament or the State Legislatures is one such important recommendation and it should be taken up. The Commission has suggested that protection should be given to a fair and substantially accurate summary of the proceedings. Now the position is this. The speaker himself is protected and the authorised report is also protected but the report in the newspaper is not protected. This is surely anomalous. As far as the authorised report is concerned, it has practically no use; it comes so late that it is useful only to a research student. For the general public, it is of no use at all. Therefore, the protection given to the authorised report is useless. What is read by the general public is the report in the newspaper and I submit that unless that is protected, no protection is really given to the report at all. The anomaly that I want to point out is this. If an accusation is made against a person, the speaker cannot be prosecuted because he is privileged. The authorised report is also privileged. But the report in the newspaper, even if it is substantially correct, even if it is fair, it is not protected. I therefore submit that this recommendation should be looked into and implemented.

There is another suggestion with regard to section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. That Calcutta incident is well known where a meeting was prohibited under section 144 and the position of the journalists came

up for discussion. A report was submitted by a judge who was appointed to enquire into the matter and he quite lightly laid down that the journalists cannot be treated otherwise than as the general public. If the general public cannot meet, then the journalists also cannot meet. The Press Commission has no doubt accepted the force of this argument but they have said that at the same time it is desirable—and I think it is desirable not only in the interests of our Press but in the interests of the Government and of the country itself—that in all such critical moments the real truth should be placed before the public. Otherwise wild gossip and wild rumours will get abroad and the public will naturally get distorted versions. It is therefore in the interests of the public, in the interests of the Executive itself, that proper reporting is done at such times and the Commission has recommended that in the order under section 144 itself, some exemption should be given to the reporters. Of course, the matter is not so easy because the law and order position is concerned and naturally the State Governments might not be willing to give this concession. At the same time, it is in Government's own interest that this point of view is not neglected. The centre should take this up with the State Governments. In a sense, it is a simple thing; because it does not require any legislation. The Central Government should send directions to the State Governments and ask them to follow the procedure. I think, it is desirable to give some such concession to reporters. Proper facilities must be given to responsible reporters on all such occasions when feelings run high and when the mob is likely to get out of control. At that time, whatever happens must be taken to the public in the proper spirit. I, therefore, submit that all these recommendations about the Press laws should be taken up by the Government. Proper freedom should be allowed to pressmen so that there is free press in our infant democracy.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN (Hyderabad): Mr. Vice-Chairman it stands to the credit of this House that they have sacrificed the Lunch hour and they are sitting late in order to show their anxiety and interest in the important subject which is before this august House. Certainly, Sir, it has been thoroughly discussed and in fact, at this late hour any further lengthy discussion would be an infliction upon all those present. So I would just make one or two observations only and close my remarks.

The first thing is that I am grateful to the Commission not only for the important and well-considered recommendations that they have made but I am still more grateful to them for the fund of information and knowledge that they have supplied to us so that we may form our own judgment also. Sir, it is certainly a document which stands to the credit of that Commission to which I pay my homage.

Now, Sir, the other thing that I want to place before this august House is that there have been a lot of discussions about and references to the Press as an industry, profits, magnates, barons and all that. I think we have to view it from an entirely different point of view. It is a public utility service. It is a service and it has to be considered from that point of view.

Sir, even in advanced countries—I have seen it in England—the press controls democracy. The press is responsible for bringing down certain ministries and for putting up certain ministries with that power. Sir, we have to see that not only that power is properly exercised especially in a country like ours, where the democracy is only seven or eight years old, but we have also to see that there is justice in that very agency also. If there is a person who enjoys with thousands of rupees and there is a working journalist, who has not got even a salary sufficient to meet his

[Shri Akbar Ali Khan.]

pressing needs, I think that press cannot do any service to democracy. That is why stress has been laid not only by the Commission, but also by every Member of this House on the condition of journalists, of which we have experience. We are all in sympathy with him and we think that the Government will not delay this matter and will soon bring legislation so that the service conditions of these people are improved without any delay.

The other thing that I observe in the redommendations is this that they have borne in mind the circumstances and the objective of our democracy, of a welfare state and a socialistic pattern. If you consider their recommendations, you will see that they had this object before them. They have brought before us the fact of half-a-dozen families controlling the newspapers of India. I am not one of those who say that they have not done this or that. No. I am one of those who pay my tribute to them for the great service that they have done during the national struggle. But what I want to say is that in the changed circumstances, in the changed context, they have to come down and realise that this monopoly cannot exist and that we cannot tolerate this monopoly. With this object in mind, I hope the Government will give due attention to the fact, because that is a very material and an important fact and as such, it should see that such legislation is brought up, which would do away with this monopolistic tendency in the Press.

Now, lastly, Sir, I heartily and warmly endorse all the recommendations that have been made by this Press Commission, by saying just a word regarding the price-page schedule. I have heard arguments in its favour and against it. I am not convinced that it is the only way by which you can improve the condition of the vernacular press. I am entirely in agreement that, if you want to

keep up your democracy, if you want to strengthen its foundations, you will have to support the local language paper by giving subsidy or by some other means, so that in course of time, when people in the villages become literate, they can have a paper. Several measures can be adopted so that these local papers get the full support. I heartily recommended the Report for action. Thank you.

SHRI R. C. GUPTA (Uttar Pradesh) Sir, I am the last speaker of the day and the time is not much. So, I will confine my speech to a few sentences. I consider that the Report of the Press Commission is monumental document and it will go down in the history of the Press in this country. Very large number of recommendations have been made by the Press Commission. I will confine myself only to a few of the most important ones. I consider that the most important of the recommendations are for the improvement of the condition of the working journalists and the constitution of the Press Council. One of the other recommendations which deserves consideration at this late hour is the price-page schedule. I am in favour of it. I do not want to say more because there is no time. I feel that this will help, to a certain extent, the small papers. So far as the question of condition of the working journalists is concerned, much has been said in this House and I entirely agree with all those observations. Their condition is appalling. Their emoluments are very scanty. It is very difficult for them to make both ends meet. This recommendation of the Press Commission should be implemented by the Government at the earliest possible opportunity whether by Executive orders or by legislation. The implementation of these recommendations should not be delayed. I would only add one thing. In the recommendations of the Commission, they say that regional conditions shall be taken into consideration in fixing the mini-

imum wage. I am in entire agreement with my friend, Shri B. D. Chaturvedi, that the minimum wage should not be based on regional considerations. It should be one for the entire country. If there are circumstances calling for better treatment at a particular place, increased dearness or local allowance or some other kind of allowance might be given. But the minimum wage must be the same throughout the country.

The last point I would like to say with regard to the Press Council is this. I attach the greatest amount of weight to this recommendation. This is the most outstanding recommendation of the Press Commission. It is absolutely necessary for the freedom of the Press. It will not in any way injure the freedom of the Press, to my mind. When the Bar Council Act was enacted, there were fears in the minds of lawyers that it will unnecessarily curtail the freedom of the lawyers. But experience has shown that that was a mere myth. Similarly, when the Medical Council Act was passed, there was a hue and cry all over the country and it was thought that the medical profession was in jeopardy. But now the opinion is that it has done a service. Similarly, I am sure that the Press Council, if established by a statutory law, will be a boon. It will not interfere in any manner with the freedom of the press. It will enhance the prestige of the press. But it does not mean that there should be no restriction; freedom always entails a certain amount of res-

triction. Freedom is not equivalent to licence. Therefore, I submit that if you want that your infant democracy should prosper on proper lines, it is necessary that a Council as envisaged in the Commission's Report should be established. I am in entire agreement with the proposed constitution of the Council. But I differ on one point that the Chairman of such a Council should be appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. I prefer that a panel of three names be recommended by the Journalists' Association or Executive Committee or whatever name might be given for the Council, and out of those three names, either the President or the Government should be entitled to select one name, so that the nominees would be of the Press Council and the final choice would be of the Government. That is the best method. This has been found good after a great deal of experience of the working of the universities all over the country. All the universities are now coming to the conclusion that this is the best way of selection of a Vice-Chancellor. With these words, I conclude.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. P. SUBBARAYAN): The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Wednesday the 14th September 1955.