

MR. CHAIRMAN: What are the names?

SHRI C. C. BISWAS: The names that are proposed to be dropped are Shri P. T. Leuva and Shri Amolakh Chand—the latter, not because he is Deputy Whip, but because he is retiring on the 2nd of April.

DR. P. C. MITRA: They are already elected.

SHRI C. C. BISWAS: And in their place I would substitute the names of Pandit S. S. N. Tankha and Shri B. M. Gupte.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: And what is the other amendment?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no other amendment.

The question is:

"That the Bill to amend and codify the law relating to marriage and divorce among Hindus be referred to a Joint Committee of the Houses, consisting of forty-five members, fifteen members from this Council, namely:

1. Dr. P. V. Kane.
2. Shrimati Rukmini Devi Arundale.
3. Dr. Raghu Vira.
4. Shri Indra Vidyavachaspati.
5. Diwan Chaman Lall.
6. Shrimati Maya Devi Chettry.
7. Shrimati Chandravati Lakhanpal.
8. Shri Govinda Reddy.
9. Shri T. S. Pattabiraman.
10. Pandit S. S. N. Tankha.
11. Shri Surendra Mahanty.
12. Shri K. Suryanarayana.
13. Shri B. M. Gupte.
14. Shri S. N. Mazumdar.
15. Shri C. C. Biswas (the Mover).

and thirty members from the House of the People;

that in order to constitute a sitting of the Joint Committee, the quorum shall be one-third of the total number of members of the Joint Committee;

that in other respects, the Rules of Procedure of this Council relating to Select Committees will apply with such variations and modifications as the Chairman may make;

that this Council recommends to the House of the People that the House do join in the said Joint Committee and communicate to this Council the names of members to be appointed by the House to the Joint Committee; and

that the Committee shall make a report to this Council on or before the last day of the second week of the next session."

The motion was adopted.

THE PRESS (OBJECTIONABLE MATTER) AMENDMENT BILL, 1953

THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND STATES (DR. K. N. KATJU): Mr. Chairman, I rise to move:

"That the Bill to amend the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act, 1951, as passed by the House of the People, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Chairman, this Bill has aroused great excitement.

SHRI S. MAHANTY (Orissa): Justifiable excitement.

DR. K. N. KATJU: But I do hope that in this House which is supposed to be the House of the elders.....

SHRI S. MAHANTY: No, no.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH (Madras): No, no.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA (Andhra): This is the Council of States and not a House of elders.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI B. GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, are we old?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, Mr. B. Gupta is by no means old.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I do hope that here it will receive dispassionate consideration, carried on in a cool and calm atmosphere. I pray that the House will deal with the matter in an objective fashion with reference to the consideration of the legal provisions.

I may, before I go further, just deal shortly with one small point. It has really not much to do with the Bill, but in a way it is the background. It was suggested that the Government, and I personally, had been guilty of some very irregular conduct in bringing in an Ordinance and thus depriving Parliament of an opportunity of considering this matter at the appropriate stage. The House would recollect that in the last session which lasted about six weeks, there was tremendous congestion of legislative business. So far as this Press Bill is concerned, for some reason or the other, the process of getting it through has always proved to be a very slow one. It takes days. In the Lower House, the House of the People, it took nearly four days, and here.....

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY (Mysore): Here it will take six days

DR. K. N. KATJU:.....you have been pleased to allot two days.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: No, no. He has not yet allotted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Go on. Let us see.

DR. K. N. KATJU: So that means clear six days for consideration. It was absolutely impossible to find six days in the last session. Anyway, the Bill was published. It was actually introduced in the House of the People, but it could not be taken up. And the question then arose as to what was to

be done. The old Act was due to expire on the 29th of January 1954, that is to say, this year. The Houses were to meet on the 15th of February, and I imagine there were many cases pending in the courts under the old Act and I shall endeavour to show that it would not have been desirable to have any sort of a gap for many reasons, Sir; one of which I think I shall give. The present Bill is a short one. If the old Act had been allowed to lapse, and if Government came to the conclusion—it had come to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly—that the Act should be extended for another term of two years, then the whole of that Act would need to be re-enacted. I do not know how hon. Members feel here, but I do attach great value to legislative time. It is, I think, a precious commodity. It is not our time or your time, it is public time and it has got to be spent in the consideration of measures of vital importance to the public at large.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: You can cut the time by dissolving Parliament and becoming a dictator.

DR. K. N. KATJU: If there was a gap, the result would have been that instead of six days, the two Houses might have taken ten or twelve days, going over every single clause, comma and full-stop.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: But how many cases were pending?

DR. K. N. KATJU: May I just most respectfully go on?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go on, Dr. Katju.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I request hon. Members kindly to allow me to proceed. Now, the gap was of fifteen days, from the 29th of January to the 15th of February. So we found the best course would be to bring in an Ordinance. An Ordinance has to be laid on the Table of the House when the Houses commence their session; and if the Houses so desire, they could denounce the Ordinance at once, in three days.

3 P.M.

The Bill had been published and the result is that the House of the People was able to discuss the measure only on the 10th March. I do submit, Sir, leaving aside the larger question as to whether Ordinances should be resorted to lightly or not lightly and so on and so forth, that in this case no harm has been done. As a matter of fact, public convenience has been promoted and a good deal of legislative time has been saved. I shall leave the matter here.

Now, so far as the Bill is concerned, it will have to be conceded that it has had an enormous public discussion in the newspapers and not in the public; but I venture to say that if there is a public debate in a public forum and if the provisions of this Bill are explained in an absolutely dispassionate and objective manner, at least 95 per cent. of the people of this country will say, "We would have it". That is my opinion; you may agree with it or not.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Why don't you take a plebiscite?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY (Orissa): Send it out for public opinion.

DR. K. N. KATJU: But there has been discussion in the newspapers and also in the other House and hon. Members practically know the pros and cons of the whole matter. Now, several objections have been raised. The first is the wide one that we must not touch the Press. The Press has become a sort of a sacred bird. It has become the fourth Estate of the Realm. In Britain, the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the King are the three Estates and they have got their special immunities and privileges and they can decide whatever they like, their own procedure, their own matters and their own conduct and so on, completely independent even of the law courts, and it is said—it is felt though not said in so many words, or sometimes that air is assumed—"we are the fourth Estate

and, therefore, do not touch us. We are prepared to be subject to the ordinary law of the land"—godness knows what that means—"but if you introduce a Bill, the title of which contains the sacred word 'Press', well, it is profanity, it cannot be passed and should not be passed". Now I say that this approach is a wrong approach. So far as the law courts are concerned, there is a very common saying, "facts are sacred; comment is free". That applies to the citizens; that applies to the Press.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: It does not apply to the Government.

DR. K. N. KATJU: You must state correct facts on which to base your comment. You have some things which are prohibited by the law of the land; incitement to violence, incitement to murder, attempts to destroy the Government by violence, the creation of enmity between the different classes of the community, seduction of the members of the Armed Forces from their loyalty and so on and so forth; every one of these is, in so many words, a crime in every country; it is a crime—I have got it here—in the Indian Penal Code. You examine it. There are six clauses and they are applicable here. I said in the other House.....

SHRI B. RATH (Orissa): You misled them.

DR. K. N. KATJU:.....and I repeat it here that each one of those clauses refers to a distinct crime, crime of great gravity or of moderate gravity but punishable as a crime, and this Press (Objectionable Matters) Act refers to writings which can be called crimes under the Penal Code. I am emphasising this point because over and over again it has been suggested that this Government is a sort of a Machiavellian Government.....

SHRI S. MAHANTY: It is.

DR. K. N. KATJU:.....that their real intention is to curb or crush political opinion, political opinion of its political opponents, that this is a

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party Government, that we are members of different parties, and that this law is being extended so that political opposition could be wiped out.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: There is no doubt about it.

(Interruptions.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: That will do. You will have your chance.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I say, Sir, that if that is the argument I do not know whether I will be able to convince them.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: That is the only argument.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I read in some papers that whatever I say is a sort of forensic trick. I myself do not know what that means.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: What?

SHRI S. MAHANTY: What?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They will explain in their opposition speeches.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I have always found that whenever my opinion goes out and the opponent with whom I am carrying on a discussion becomes speechless and cannot find a ready answer by way of an argument, he always retorts "Well you are a lawyer. What can I do?" That has been said in many newspapers and probably will be repeated here. Otherwise, I ask every hon. Member, irrespective of parties, to put to himself this clear and frank question as to what is an objectionable matter against which this Act is intended. That is the first question. The second question is: Is not that matter something which is punishable by law and for which

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Then why have a special Act?

SHRI B. RATH: Why this special Act?

DR. K. N. KATJU:.....if a prosecution were launched and if the guilt is established.....

(Interruptions.)

MR. CHAIRMAN. Order, order.

DR. K. N. KATJU: Sir, you are putting too great a burden upon them. They cannot restrain themselves.

Now, I say, Sir, the offender can be prosecuted and if the Judge finds him guilty, the offender exposes himself to severe punishment.

Secondly, I make bold to say that in the definition of objectionable matter, there is not a trace, not a single word direct or indirect, which could possibly be said to aim at suppression of political opinion in the country completely. Either you come within those six sections of the Indian Penal Code or you do not. All political discussions, right political discussions are free.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: What is this "right" and qualified statement? "Right political discussion"—what is it?

DR. K. N. KATJU: No, no, I mean wrong political discussion.

SHRI B. RATH: What does he mean?

(Interruptions.)

DR. K. N. KATJU: You are following their bad example.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

DR. K. N. KATJU: When I said, "political opinion", well, on a particular question only one political opinion can be right. Supposing there are ten political opinions expressed, seven or eight of them are going to be wrong; one or two may be right but no one says that it is not open to any citizen of India to publish, to practise, to express with the utmost strength, with the utmost force, any political opinion he likes stopping short of violence, and provided also that he does not come within those six sections of the Indian Penal Code which, according to everybody's saying, constitutes the ordinary law of the land and which has been in force in India probably since 1862, leaving aside one section, section 153A, which may have come

in later; otherwise it has been the law of the land for eighty or ninety years. If you do not come within those sections then your liberty is unlimited. You may do what you like and the Act does not apply to you. I do beg the House to consider this aspect of the matter, namely, that this is not an Act intended to suppress political opinion but to stop the propagation of and encouragement to the commission of offences.

Then it is said: "Why don't you prosecute? Here it is. You ask us to furnish security." Now this argument I have not been able to understand. There may be something in it. I can prosecute the printer. I can prosecute the publisher. I can prosecute the writer. So far as the writer is concerned, he is not hit by this Act. The publisher and the keeper are hit. Mr. Chairman, you know that there is what is called the Press Registration Act and before you can start a press or publish a newspaper you have to register the name of the keeper of the press. He may be the owner. He may be your servant. Similarly there must be a publisher of a newspaper. He may be the writer himself, the proprietor, the keeper of the press or he may be another gentleman. Now both of them can be prosecuted if they publish anything which comes within those six sections of the Penal Code. Every proceeding under the Act is directed to those six sections and nothing else.

Then, another feature is this. The question as to whether a particular writing does or does not come within those six sections is not left to the decision, sound or arbitrary, right or wrong, of the executive. This is the leading feature. The executive comes to the conclusion: "These writings are blame-worthy. They come within those six sections." What are they to do? They have to file a complaint. That is the word used in the Act. Before whom? Not a Second Class Magistrate or Third Class Magistrate or even a First Class Magistrate.

They have to file a complaint before the Sessions Judge. Now, I have been at the Bar for nearly forty years and I have been listening always to the cry of the separation of the Judiciary from the Executive. But no one has contested all these years that a Judge of the High Court or a Sessions Judge is in any shape or form under the control or under the influence of the Executive. Whatever you say, it is always said of the Magistrates, but our Sessions Judges are always rightly regarded as and, they are, men of impartiality, learning and experience. They are senior Judges and they know something about the law. They hold trials in which a man may be sentenced to death. They are respectable people. This complaint is to be lodged before that Sessions Judge and the proceeding starts just as it were a case before the court. Notice is issued to the keeper of the press or the publisher against whom the proceeding has been launched. There is the argument. There is the evidence and argument, may be oral, may be written, in order to show as to what you meant or what you did not mean, what has been the trend of your discussion, what have been your policies. It is open to both parties, the Government and the opposition, to file in evidence what has been published before in a number of newspaper issues for one month, two months, and on all that material the Sessions Judge comes to a decision. The complaint says, "This writing is blame-worthy. It comes within the four corners of those six sections." Therefore, what do you do? If it were an ordinary complaint before a criminal court, just like any criminal complaint, the Sessions Judge will try, and if he finds that the accused is guilty, he will pronounce sentence, may be five years, may be Rs. 500, or he may acquit. In this case, I say, it is the most lenient. The Government has been very cautious. They don't want to punish. They give you a time to behave yourself, to mend your manners. All that the Government says in the complaint is: "This thing is all blame-worthy and please, therefore, ask him to deposit a security,

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may be Rs. 500, or Rs. 50,000—it does not matter.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: May be Rs. 5,00,000.

DR. K. N. KATJU: The Sessions Judge goes into the matter, precisely like a trial in a criminal court, and then he says, "Well, this matter is really nothing; not blame-worthy at all. You are all wrong." Or he says, "You have made a mountain of a mole hill. May be objectionable, but really it is very trivial. No action need be taken." Or he may say, "Yes, it is objectionable but I think the circumstances require only a warning." Or, the Act clearly says and the Sessions Judge may say, "Yes, some security should be deposited, but you have asked for much too high a figure." Within the limits he may pronounce any judgment. Then, there is an appeal to the High Court and the High Court pronounces its judgment. Please remember, Mr. Chairman, I repeat once again that all this is written material which you have to read and say whether this is good or bad. You may prove it.

Take, for instance the case of defamation. The ordinary example is: Whatever is true is not defamatory. In order to prove a writing a defamatory writing you must show in the first place that it is wholly false and secondly that that falsehood is calculated to injure your character, to lower your reputation because you lose thereby, and all that sort of thing.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Honesty is on that side and we have to prove that it is true.

SHRI RAMA RAO (Andhra): Do I understand from the hon. Dr. Katju that truth is a complete defence in a case of defamation? Suppose I say and I prove, that a thing I have said is true. Is it a complete defence? Is no other defence wanted?

DR. K. N. KATJU: That is my understanding of the law that truth is a complete defence. Will you please allow me to go on?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Rama Rao, you will have your chance.

DR. K. N. KATJU: Suppose somebody wrote about me that I was going to the Government House every night and spending the night there and if that is established to be an absolute lie, well, the further question arises whether it is defamatory or not, but if you do show that I did go there and spend the night there, it is not defamation. It all depends on the circumstances of each case. Well, I do not want to carry on an argument. I am only telling you my appreciation of the law. It may be wrong, I do not know.

SHRI B. RATH: How do you tolerate, Sir, such twisting of the law?

DR. K. N. KATJU: Now, on these trial proceedings. I cannot understand how by any stretch of imagination it can be described as an arbitrary exercise of executive authority intended to kill the expression of political opinion and crush the political parties. The other thing deals with the forfeiture of the objectionable matter. There is no question of security. The Government just seizes the thing. Now, under the old Press Act the discretion was given to the Government to take steps. In this Act you cannot do so. It is the Judge's function to pass judgment after hearing both parties, and that is the best thing. It is understood everywhere that the law officers of the Government are advocates of eminence. They may be in the service of the Government but they exercise independent judgment and their professional opinion is always in consonance with the best traditions of the profession, namely, whenever you are asked to give an opinion it is your duty to give it honestly, to give it frankly and to give it truthfully as you understand the law. Now, no action can be taken under section 11 towards the forfeiture of any objectionable matter, be it a book or a newspaper, without getting the prior certificate, if it is the Central Government, from the Attorney-General, or if it is a State Government, from

the Advocate-General, that that particular publication or the passage does in point of law constitute objectionable matter. When you have got that, then the Government can take action, but that does not complete the chapter. As soon as the order is passed, the person whose property or whose papers have been forfeited has a right to go in appeal or to move the High Court—may be two judges, may be three judges—and those judges are not confined to any particular process. The law is in the widest terms. The High Court Judges may pass any order they like; they may reverse the order, they may confirm the order, they may vary the order, they may do whatever they like. Now, I do ask you, Mr. Chairman, to consider whether this Act is in any way, in the remotest manner, an attack upon the liberty of the Press. Does it constitute an infringement of the right of the Indian Press to carry on its activities in the most extensive manner possible? Is it contended that the Press in India should have an unlimited right to spread seditious doctrine, to spread violence in the country, to try to seduce the loyalty of our armed forces, to interfere with the distribution of essential commodities, to take steps by which particular communities, Sikhs and Hindus, Hindus and Muslims—and may I say one thing—the working classes and the industrialists or the Peasants and the land-lords... ..

(Interruptions.)

SHRI B. RATH: There is no logic in what he says.

DR. K. N. KATJU: That is not my fault; that is your fault. I submit, Sir, is it to be said that the Press should have these liberties? I have not been able to understand.....

SHRI B. GUPTA: You will never understand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

DR. K. N. KATJU: What is the point of attack behind this? How do you say it goes against the liberties of the Press? It was asked—how was the

Act worked in the past—in the lower House.....

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: There is no lower House under the Constitution.

MR. CHAIRMAN: House of the People.

(Interruptions.)

SHRI B. GUPTA: He is unconstitutional.

DR. K. N. KATJU: What is it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What he says is that the other House is called the House of the People, not the lower House.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I am very sorry.

(Interruptions.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I do not propose to give the names of newspapers for a variety of reasons. I do not want, in the first place, to give them any advertisement. But there are figures here. Objectionable matter may be roughly divided into matter as defined under section 3—defamation against morality, obscene, scurrilous—and then there are five other classes of a different kind—violence, incitement to murder, enmity between different sections of the community.

Now, under this first, namely, scurrilous matter, defamation, etc., altogether there were 53 prosecutions launched. These are the figures beginning from 1st February 1952 when the Act was enacted up to 31st October 1953, that is the latest that I have been able to gather. Now, out of these 53, in 13 cases security was demanded by the Sessions Judge. In 4 the complaint was dismissed. The Sessions Judge thought that there was nothing in it. In 2 the Government, of its own accord, withdrew the complaint.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Why?

DR. K. N. KATJU: And the number of cases pending was 34. Now objectionable matter coming under this

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section 3 was forfeited in 33 cases and in 53 cases action has been started. In one of the cases in which no action was taken, the facts have become notorious. There was a newspaper which published something against a highly placed officer of India serving the nation in a foreign land that he had raped a woman, abducted her and then some process of marriage had been gone through. Now, from top to bottom it is absolutely false, completely false. For 12 years they have been living a happy married life. This was a trial with jury. The jury thought that this was undoubtedly an objectionable matter. Who can deny it? But the jury said that no action need be taken. I am only mentioning this that in the four cases which were dismissed one was this. Now, I am asked. What is the justification? If you have 86 cases, is not that sufficient justification? The House may take this from me that every State Government . . .

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: Would it not have been better in this particular case to proceed in the ordinary way instead of resorting to this kind of thing?

DR. K. N. KATJU: I wish it could have been done. Then the man would have gone somewhere else.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: Why did you not send him to the proper place?

DR. K. N. KATJU: My hon. friend is irrepressible. Now, Sir, this thing happened and the illustrations are there. What I was saying was that all the State Governments have said that this procedure is cumbersome and dilatory. You will notice 34 cases are pending. The Sessions Judge issues notice probably fixing a month's time, the respondent appears and asks for time; lawyers appear—men of my fraternity—and take two months, three months or four months and like this the delay occurs. The matter is of great urgency but this goes on and the State Governments have said that they have exercised the greatest caution and circumspection and waited till their

patience was absolutely exhausted, and even then they had to take action in 86 cases. Now, the prosecutions launched in respect of cases covered by sub-sections (i) to (v) of section 3 number 33. In one case the finding was that there was objectionable matter but the accused was let off with a warning. Security was demanded in three cases; complaints were dismissed in 16 cases and 13 cases were pending on that date, namely, 31st October. So far as forfeited matter was concerned, the forfeitures were 15 altogether. Thus, there were 48 cases, prosecutions and forfeitures, under clauses (i) to (v) of Section 3. The grand total would then be 86 plus 48.

AN HON MEMBER: How many dismissed?

DR. K. N. KATJU: Mr. Chairman, I have been asked for instances. It will be a very tiresome task. I referred to two, and it was taken as if that was the entire store at my disposal and they said it was trivial. Already, I have got it here and the hon. Members know it—I mean the tram strike agitation. I am not thinking of Congress or non-Congress papers; but, believe me, don't blame me, the whole Press went wild . . .

SHRI B. GUPTA: You went wild; the Government went wild.

DR. K. N. KATJU: All right; the whole Press went "mild"! I said "wild"; now I say "mild". In Calcutta, I know, the Communist Party is strongly represented and I do not know how many groups are there within that, the Marxist Party, the Revolutionary Marxist Party, The Brown Communist Party, the Black Communist Party; and I think all of them have got papers; we all know and the Members have read; everything was written. It is rather delicate; all sorts of Members are here; I do not want to read them here. And, one thing was said about me, it was very recent . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have heard about it.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: We would like to hear about him.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I want to make one correction; I was referring to some article in some 'Calcutta paper'; it was not a Calcutta paper; it was some other paper published elsewhere. I do not blame the Calcutta papers; they were very kind to me personally and I do not blame them. It so happened that when these discussions were going on in the other House, a Tamil paper dated the 12th March.....

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Does the hon Minister know Tamil?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was the Deputy Speaker who assisted him.

DR. K. N. KATJU: There was a speech there: "Blood will flow like water; heads will be rolling" and so on.

(Interruption.)

You will give me your version of the heads rolling.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE (Hyderabad): What was the reference about him, Sir?

DR. K. N. KATJU: It was a Tamil paper; it is very wrong of them.....

SHRI S. MAHANTY: On a point of order, Sir. I think the hon. Minister is trying to build up a case; he should mention the name of the paper and state the facts specifically.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: And such papers may also be placed on the Table.

DR. K. N. KATJU: Mr. Chairman, the question now is why there should be an extension of this Bill for two years. This matter has been under consideration for over 12 months and I may inform the House that we might have brought in a Bill much earlier, probably milder, probably stronger. I am not going into details. The Press Commission was appointed and began to function; we thought that the Press Commission should be allowed to investigate the matter fully and we wanted to make full use of its deliberations and its recommendations. The Press Commission, as is the habit of Commissions—their work has enlarged.....

SHRI B. RATH: Do I understand from the hon. Minister that he is not satisfied with the working of the Commission?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He only said that the work of the Commission has enlarged.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I expect the Commission to report some time in May or June; and then, in the ordinary course, it will be sent to the State Governments and published for public opinion and then the Government will have to take a decision on it. We would like to expedite the whole business.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the Prime Minister has a statement to make. The Prime Minister.

STATEMENT ON KOREA

THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE (SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU): Sir, I must apologise for intervening in this way; I had no desire to come in the way of my hon. friend speaking.

With your permission, Sir, I would like to lay a statement on Korea on the Table of the House. I do not propose to take up the time of the House by reading it; it is rather a long statement. It does not contain any new facts. It is a record—a factual record—of what happened in Korea in so far as our Custodian Force and the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission were concerned. I think it would be right and proper for a record like this to be placed on the Table of the House because it brings to an end a certain significant chapter in our recent history in which we undertook a difficult and delicate task abroad, a unique one, which had no previous parallel. We had to face enormous difficulties there. Anyhow, it is over and hon. Members know more or less what has happened there.

There is only one aspect, one small aspect of it which is not quite completed; that is, 88 of the old prisoners of war who had not been finally