

make a Council in a State; you do not make a Council combining all the four States. So, it is very clear. Let this apprehension go out from the mind of the hon. Member that no region has to do anything with this Council. Some people are taking that sort of plea as to what will happen to that. Let us talk to those State Governments on what could be done for the tribals in that area. The Orissa and West Bengal Governments are doing their best to uplift those sectors. But let the Bihar Government fulfil the commitment which my hon. Member perhaps has just said that the Bill should be passed. So, I would request the hon. Member to talk to his party Chief Minister to get it implemented at the earliest.

Let the House know that the total credit goes to the Bihar Chief Minister who has agreed that the Bill should also come by the end of this year. So, the credit for the Bill again goes to the Bihar Chief Minister.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: I would like to seek a clarification on this. I would like to put a question to the hon. Minister through you and would like to ask about the finality on the subject.

The issue of Jharkhand has been engaging the attention of this country for more than a decade very actively. With the intervention of the Home Ministry from here and the goodwill of the Bihar Chief Minister—we have read about it in the Press—that some kind of mutually acceptable solution has been found.

Today, I find that, in the answer to this question and a clarification given on behalf of the hon. Chief Minister of Bihar by the hon. Member on the other side and also a point made by the leader of the movement, there seems to be no meeting point between the stand of the hon. Home Minister and the Chief Minister. A new dimension has been added by the hon. Member from Bihar that unless all the three or four States agree, there cannot be a finality to this question. Are we left in wilderness? This House is entitled to know what is going to be the final end, the final outcome of the agreement that has been signed. Will all the four States also be involved or is it within the competence of the Bihar Government assisted by the Central Government that the Development Council is going to see the end of the day?

Also, now, simultaneously, elections have been announced in Bihar. Nobody is bothered. People are more bothered about capturing votes instead of solving the issue.

Therefore, let this House be told by the hon. Home Minister where does the finality lie. What is the final end and where is this agreement going to lead us. I am not very sure about it. The hon. Minister has just stated "by the end of this year". "This year" means only three weeks to go. Will it be possible to ensure that this thing is seen through in the Bihar Assembly in the shortest possible time? The record of Bihar State is something which does not hold out whether the Government will be able to bring about a change and bring a Bill in the Assembly and pass that so that the people of Jharkhand feel satisfied. I also appreciate the stand taken by the Movement Leaders. There must be a clear stand taken by the Government of India. If the Bihar Government, by any other reason, is not

competent, is not able to finalise that Bill and is not able to pass the Bill, what will the Government of India do? Will this House be taken into confidence and will that Bill be brought here? Is this House competent to pass that Bill? What is the stand of the Government?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have made it very clear and let me repeat again that this Council concerns 18 districts of Bihar State. The hon. Member can add any dimensions to the agreement. But the agreement between the State Government and the agitating Movement leaders is for an autonomous council of 18 districts of Bihar. It has nothing to do with Orissa or West Bengal and no other State is involved. That point is very clear, let it go on record.

The second point is, as far as implementation by the State Government is concerned, let me assure the House that the hon. Prime Minister while speaking from Red Fort had assured the Jharkhand leaders that we would solve the Jharkhand problem. We are totally committed to the upliftment of the tribal and neglected areas. We maintain that and we shall use our good offices to solve the problem. Let there be no apprehension that we will not be involving ourselves after signing the agreement. We are committed for that. We have said this not only to this House but the hon. Prime Minister has assured the whole nation. But let us try our best to put it in a systematic way which we have agreed upon. As I have said, we, on behalf of the Government, will try our best to get it solved at the earliest.

When I say, "by the end of this year"—I know that only three weeks are left as the hon. Member has pointed out. But there was a question from one hon. Member from that side asking "could it be possible?" So I have said, "we will do our best to get it done by the end of this year." It depends on the efforts from both the sides. But we, on behalf of the Home Ministry, will put our best efforts to get it moved at the earliest...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have given half-an-hour to this question...(*Interruptions*)

#### Entry of Foreign Media

\*22. SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL:  
SHRI BRAHMANAND MAÑDAL:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have since finalised their views regarding the entry of foreign media in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay;

(d) whether the Government have received some representations opposing the entry of foreign media in the country;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time by which the Government propose to take a decision on the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF

INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO): (a) There is no change in view in the matter of entry of foreign print media in the country. The Government continues to be guided by its 1955 policy decision which provides that no foreign owned newspaper/periodical should be permitted to be published in India.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) A statement indicating the names of organisations opposing the entry of foreign media in the country is laid on the Table of the House.

(f) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) and (b) above.

#### Statement

*Organisations Opposing the entry of Foreign Media*

1. All India Newspaper Editor's Conference.
2. All India Small & Medium Newspapers Federation.
3. All India Small & Medium Newspapers Association.
4. Indian Federation of Small & Medium Newspapers.
5. The Indian Newspaper Society.
6. Indian Languages Newspaper Association.
7. Indian Journalists Union.
8. National Union of Journalists.
9. All India Newspaper Employees Federation.

*[Translation]*

SHRI BRAHMANAND MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a Committee of Secretaries was formed in regard to foreign print media and whether it had submitted any report and if so, what are the contents of the report?

*[English]*

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Yes, Sir, the Committees of Secretaries are formed. They meet and give recommendations to the Government. I do not think, it will be proper for me to lay the Report of the Committee of Secretaries, which is meant for the Cabinet or for the Group of Minister, to be laid on the Table of the House, I seek your indulgence on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, if there is something which can be disclosed to the House, it should be disclosed. If there is something which, you think, cannot be disclosed to the House in the public interest, you may not.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, it would be a precedent, I would not like to set such a precedent by placing it here.

MR. SPEAKER: I have given my ruling. Anything which can be disclosed to the House should be disclosed. anything which cannot be disclosed in public interest, may not be disclosed. I leave it to you.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: I crave your indulgence, Sir, I would not like to divulge the proceedings.

MR. SPEAKER: All right.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Sir, the clocks are still unchanged!

MR. SPEAKER: This is because of the connection with the microphones and all those things.

*[Translation]*

SHRI BRAHMANAND MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not received an answer to my question. I would like to know the contents of the report submitted by the Committee of Secretaries in regard to foreign print media.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister has said that it cannot be disclosed.

SHRI BRAHMANAND MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my supplementary question is whether a high level cabinet committee had been constituted and if so, then tell us about the decision taken by it?

*[English]*

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Yes, Sir, there is a group of Ministers, which had been formed to review the 1955 decision and they have given their observations to the Government of India.

*[Translation]*

SHRI BRAHMANAND MANDAL: What are those observations? None of my question has been answered.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am glad that the Government have decided after a discussion that the status quo will be maintained and the foreign print media will not be allowed to come here. But I would like to know as to what decision has been taken by the Government in regard to news-agencies? Because the answer says only this;

*[English]*

"The Government continues to be guided by its 1955 policy decision which provides that no foreign owned newspaper/periodical shall be permitted to be published in India."

*[Translation]*

But so far as I remember the policy of the Central Government regarding a decision taken about foreign news agencies in 1955 or any other time has been that if they want to publish their news in India or want to work here then they will have to work through an Indian news agency and not directly. A change seems to have been made in this stand. What change has been made in regard to Reuter and why? Please furnish this information to the House.

So far as I have been informed it has been mentioned in the press media that those who have opposed the entry of foreign media have requested for the maintenance of the status quo in regard to news-agencies. As per my information the Press Council of India also agrees to it. The Government should come out with a clarification.

*[English]*

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, the hon. Member, who had been the former Minister of Information & Broadcasting, is very correct. There had been one

arrangement between PTI and Reuter and permission had been given. Otherwise, the views regarding the news agency as well as the entry of foreign media are exactly what the hon. Member has said and there is no change in the Government's stand on that. But the agreement between PTI and Reuter did take place about three years back and it was on a selective basis. I can lay the details of it on the Table of the House. I do not have it readily available with me here.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has given an assurance that the Government will stick to the decision taken in regard to the foreign media in 1955. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether they would consider the suggestion made by the second Press Commission that a legislation would be brought in regard to foreign media.

The second question is whether an agreement has been entered into between the Financial Express London and Anand Bazar Patrika or any tie up has been decided upon. Whether the Government know about this? If so, then please clarify it.

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, about these two foreign papers, there is a proposal asking the Government to allow the tie-ups between *Financial Times* and *Anand Bazaar Patrika*. There are five such applications, which have come. As I said, the Government's stand has been in consonance with the 1955 Cabinet Resolution and the I&B Ministry or the Government has not yet given permission and it has been consistently denying it keeping in view the 1955 Cabinet decision.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY: Please answer my first question.

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: On the Press Council, I cannot tell offhand.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY: Please tell us about the Press Commission.

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Regarding the Press Commission, I will have to supply the information.

SHRI MURLI DEORA: I want to congratulate the Government for standing by the policy decision taken based on 1955 Resolution. The question is on foreign media and the hon. Minister has replied about the print media. What is the Government's stand as far as electronic media is concerned? There is no clarification on electronic media.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: As per the definition of 'foreign media', the term primarily stands for print media, newspapers and periodicals. That is why I answered about the print media.

SHRI MURLI DEORA: Now the electronic media is also there.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: This will have to be reviewed to take into account the views of the satellite communication and other electronic media. That will have to be reviewed and till that review is not done, it will be too premature to say the policy regarding electronic media at the moment.

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Sir, in his reply, the hon. Minister has stated that nine news organizations have opposed the entry of foreign media. I want to know from the hon. Minister as to what are the main reasons of their argument for opposing the entry of foreign media. If it has been scrutinised, what was the net result? I would also like to know as to which Committee or Agency has scrutinised all their arguments?

MR. SPEAKER: Why are they objecting?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, there are a large number of arguments. The first and primary argument is the sovereignty of the country. The second argument is that foreign media may influence public opinion and it would be undesirable. And in consonance with the reasons held out by the 1955 Cabinet decision, this has been reiterated by various agencies, bodies of working journalists and editors of various bodies. Also there is equally a strong view that it should be allowed. So there is a national debate going on. A large number of points have been made. If you want me to give the details, Sir, I will come later on.

MR. SPEAKER: You should be on your own. Every time I cannot be called for.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: The reason is that in a participatory democracy it may have an influence on the public mind.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN: Thank you, Sir, for giving me an opportunity. In the year 1982, the Second Press Commission headed by Justice K.K. Mathew had made some recommendations debarring foreign ownership of press media. Twelve years had been passed by now. Remembering the recommendations of this Second Press Commission, I would like to know whether the Government will be willing to implement its decision by enactment of a legislation or at least come for a full-fledged debate on the issue on the Floor of the House?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: A number of recommendations made by the Press Commission have not yet seen the light of the day. The Government is endeavouring to see that all are implemented. But a discussion is always welcome. I would welcome it.

### Captive Power Plants

\*23. SHRI ANKUSHRAO RAOSAHEB TOPE:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Coal India Limited has offered some Captive Power Plants to private parties under the 'build-own-operate' scheme;

(b) if so, the details alongwith locations thereof, State-wise;