

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

I place a copy of it on the Table of the House. (*Placed in Library. See No. LT-600/69*).

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Umanath.

SHRI NATH PAI (Rajapur) : Sir, why did you disallow the calling-attention notice on this very matter? We are very happy to hear the Prime Minister. You please guide us. On the same matter, you disallowed a calling-attention notice.

MR. SPEAKER : I cannot answer now like that. I have called Shri Umanath.

12.30 hrs.

STATEMENT UNDER DIRECTION 115

CHANGE IN TIMINGS OF A.I.R. NEWS BULLETINS

SHRI UMANATH (Pudukkottai) : Mr. Speaker Sir, on 19.2.1968, a starred question No. 47 was asked of the Minister of Information and Broadcasting which was as follows :

- (a) "Whether it is a fact that the Tamil Nadu Government have protested against the change in timings of the All India Radio news bulletin in the morning ;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that the Chief Minister of that State also met him in this regard ?"

(Lok Sabha proceedings)

Shri Satyanarayan Sinha, Minister of Information and Broadcasting while replying in the affirmative to part (b) and (c) of the question, made the following statement in reply to para (a) of the question :

"No formal protest from the Tamilnadu Government has been received"
(Lok Sabha proceedings).

This statement of the Union Minister has been refuted on point of fact, by the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu government, Thiru M. Karunanidhi on 10.3.1969. Re-

porting Thiru. M. Karunanidhi, the PTI despatch dated 10th March, 1969 states :

"Replying to a calling attention notice, Mr. Karunanidhi said the State Government had protested against the shifting of the morning English bulletin from 8-00 a.m. to 8.15 a.m., giving priority to the Hindi news bulletin.

"The Chief Minister said it was not correct to say that there had been no official protest from the State Government against the change in timings after the correspondence between the late, Chief Minister of Tamilnadu Mr. C.N. Annadurai and the Prime Minister in this regard in December.

He expressed regret at the reported statement of the Union Minister for Information in Parliament recently that there has been no official protest from the State Government".

The *Hindu* report adds :

"Mr. Karunanidhi pointed out that immediately after the change was introduced on December 8th, the State Government had sent a communication to the centre objecting to it and had also received a reply"

In face of these facts, in which the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu cited written communications, I submit that the categorical statement of the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting denying any formal protest having been made by the State Government to the Centre, is misleading. I also submit that it was not fair and just that the Union Minister should keep the House unaware of the communications having direct bearings on the pointed question. I further submit that in fairness to the House, the communications referred to by the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu Government relevant to part (a) of the question, be placed on the Table of the House, at least now, after all that has happened.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION
AND BROADCASTING AND COM-
MUNICATIONS (SHRI SATYA
NARAYAN SINHA : The information
given was correct in so

far as the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Communications was aware of the facts. The answer did suggest that the Tamil Nadu Government had certain objections to the decision and the matter was under discussion by the then Minister of Information & Broadcasting and the late Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

2. On enquiries made subsequently it came to be known that the Late Chief Minister had addressed a letter dated 10th December, 1968, to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister had replied to him on the 24th December, 1968.

श्री मधु लिमये (मुंगेर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरा प्वाटई ग्राफ आर्डर है। मुझे इसी समय इसको उठाना चाहिये...

MR. SPEAKER : Let him finish his statement. Then you can raise it.

SHRI SATYA NARAYAN SINHA ; A copy each of these two letters is laid on the Table of the House.

3. It is regretted that this correspondence could not be mentioned in the answer given as the same had not been passed on to this Ministry. It is an unstated assumption that the answers given in reply to questions are based on whatever information is available in the Ministry concerned at that time. However, not mentioning this correspondence did not make any material difference in the position. There was no question of suppression of any facts or misleading the House.

[Copies of Letters]

My dear Prime Minister,

SUBJECT : *All India Radio—Morning News Bulletin in English—Change of time from 8.00 a.m. to 8-15 a.m.*

With effect from 8-12-1968, the daily morning English News Bulletin of All India Radio is being broadcast at 8-15 a.m. instead of at 8.00 a.m. In the place of the English News Bulletin, the Hindi Bulletin is being broadcast at 8.00 a.m. This change has been viewed with grave misgivings by the people of this State for reasons

which may apply equally well to people in other States also.

In the first place, the morning English News Bulletin was being broadcast at 8 a.m. ever since news Bulletins are being broadcast in India on the Radio, i.e., for the last few decades. Any such long established practice should be changed only if there are strong, convincing and acceptable reasons to justify the change. So far as one can see, there have been no such reasons to warrant any change in the hour of broadcast of the English News Bulletin in the morning. Secondly, people especially those going to offices early in the morning have got accustomed to listening to the English News Bulletin at 8 a.m. and they are bound to be inconvenienced by the hour of broadcast being changed to 8-15 a.m. Further, the time signal is given at 8 a.m. and the people listening to the English News Bulletin have got accustomed to check up their watches with the time signal. When the News Bulletin is broadcast at 8-15 a.m. there is no such scope for checking up their watches with the time signal. Above all, the deliberate substitution of the Hindi News Bulletin for the English News Bulletin at 8 a.m. necessarily implies that a higher place is given to Hindi in the general scheme of things than to English. The political implications of this development must be obvious to you. Already there have been sharp reactions among sections of the people in this State protesting against the change.

I would request you to deeply ponder over the matter and consider whether the resentment and complications engendered by this unfortunate change of time of the morning English News Bulletin would make it advisable to adhere to the decision. I would earnestly request you to reconsider the whole matter and take steps to ensure that the status quo ante is restored.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- Dr. C.N. Annaduri

Smt. Indira Gandhi,
Prime Minister of India, New Delhi.

[Shri Satya Narain Sinha]

No. 1413-PMO/68

December 24, 1968.

Dear Shri Annadurai

I am sorry I could not write to you earlier in reply to your letter of 10th December about the recent change in the timings of the news bulletin of All India Radio.

I appreciate that any change of this kind may initially create some inconvenience, and involves necessary adjustments. As you are perhaps aware, the matter was raised in Parliament and the Minister of Information and Broadcasting explained the circumstances in which the change was found necessary. The arrangement which has been adopted represents a compromise; whereas the morning news bulletin in English has been re-scheduled from 8 a.m. to 8.15 a.m., the evening bulletin in English, which has an even wider listening, continues to be broadcast at 9 p.m. as before.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- Indira Gandhi

Shri C.N. Annadurai,
Chief Minister of Madras,
Fort St. George,
Madras.

श्री मधु लिमये : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस तरह पचासों बार हुआ है कि प्रधानमंत्री या उप-प्रधान मंत्री या दूसरे मंत्रालयों को पत्र लिखे जाते हैं—इनके विभिन्न विभागों में कोआर्डिनेशन नहीं है—हमको इस तरह के गलत या झूठे उत्तर मिलते हैं...(व्यवधान)... मैं आपसे यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि प्रधान मंत्री को आप यह निर्देश दें कि वह अपने विभागों में कोआर्डिनेशन लायें या कोई मिनिस्ट्री आफ कोआर्डिनेशन बनायें। हम उस तरह के झूठे उत्तर नहीं सुनना चाहते—यह संसदीय कार्य-प्रणाली के लिए बहुत जरूरी है।

MR. SPEAKER : Now we go to the next item. Mr. Venkatasubbaiah.

SHRI UMANATH : I was earlier provided with a statement of the Minister. A certain sentence, which is found in that statement, has now been left out by the Minister. There it was clearly stated :

"Nevertheless, the Minister regrets that an inaccuracy should have crept into the answer."

It was a categorical sentence which had been included in the Minister's statement that was sent to me.....

MR. SPEAKER : Even now the word 'regret' is there.

SHRI UMANATH : There were two sentences...(Interruptions)

SHRI SATYANARAYAN SINHA—rose.

MR. SPEAKER : I am to reply. I am satisfied that the word 'regret' is there. That was read out.

SHRI UMANATH : There were two sentences. 'The Minister greatly regrets...' (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Venkatasubbaiah.

SHRI UMANATH : My second point is this.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Venkatasubbaiah.

SHRI UMANATH : When questions are asked of a particular Minister, the reply is on behalf of Government. When the Prime Minister had received a letter from the State Government, it was the responsibility of the Prime Minister to send a copy to the Ministry ; otherwise, people take it as a reprieve...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order. Mr. Venkatasubbaiah.