

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप के कहने के मुताबिक मुझे और कोई काम नहीं है, सारा दिन सुदर्शन चक्र चलाया करूँ ।

श्री मधु लिमये : यह कोई मेरा व्यक्तिगत मामला नहीं है, निजी मामला नहीं है, यह सदन की गरिमा का, लोकतन्त्र की गरिमा का मामला है । आप कुछ ऐसा आभास पैदा करते हैं कि मेरे बीच में और आप के बीच में कोई मामला है । न इस में आप दोषी हैं और न हम दोषी हैं ।

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह (चतरा) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, ये तो खुद शिशुपाल का पाट कर रहे हैं, । अगर सुदर्शन चक्र चला तो इन्हें बत्र होगा ।

12.16 hrs.

PRESS COUNCIL (AMENDMENT)
BILL—contd.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR (Ahmedabad): I was saying yesterday that the hon. Minister, Shri Gujral thought that this Bill was a simple measure and that it did not merit more further discussion. The entire debate that has gone on has shown that a number of important and serious implications of the functioning of the Press Council and the larger concept of the freedom of the Press in this country are involved. I was somewhat surprised when the hon. Minister said: "Unfortunately there was some criticism about the appointment of the nominating committee about the members of the committee themselves." I do not think that the criticism that was levelled against the appointments was in any way a reflection on the three distinguished citizens of our Republic: the Chief Justice, the Chairman of the Council of States and you, Mr. Speaker. But if we say that because a particular individual was being criticised in the newspapers, therefore suddenly you change the

whole system—is it right for us to accept that? We have a free and independent Press. It cannot be a respecter of some individuals and therefore would not criticise some individuals when those individuals are involved in the performance of their duties. For the benefit of my friend, the Hon. Minister, and of the House, I shall quote a para from the Foreward to a book, edited by Vivian Brodzky and entitled "Fleet Street—The inside story of journalism," by the Duke of Edinburgh. The Duke says there:

"Exasperating as I sometimes found the newspapers—and I do not think I am alone in that—our society would be less diverse and much poorer without the great range of papers and periodicals which we are still lucky enough to enjoy in this country. Genuine democracy can only flourish if it is exposed to the scrutiny of a free and uncensored Press."

You will see that it is within the legitimate rights of a free and independent Press to criticise the actions of any individual howsoever high placed he might be. The three gentlemen of this Committee are important officers, holding very dignified positions in the democratic set-up. If they did something which is part of their function as members of the Committee, their actions are liable to criticism. That being so, the point to consider is whether such high offices should be brought into public debate and public controversy.

How is it that the Government did not think about this point at that time? Did they not envisage this possibility? Inevitably to some extent their actions will also be criticised. I should have thought that if criticism was fair, it should have been accepted. Anyway it is no use crying over spilt milk. The Minister tells us that the three gentlemen had resigned and the nominating committee is not functioning; that the term of office of the Press

Council was coming to an end. My friend Shri Chandrakar from the Congress said that even at this late stage the entire House might make a unanimous request to the nominating committee that they continue to function so that the problem could be solved. But judging from the manner in which the resignations had been tendered, I do not think that that suggestion would be accepted. In any case, I doubt whether this House can make such a unanimous recommendation especially in the light of the debate that has taken place yesterday, when some hon. members did, criticise the functioning of this or that member of the nominating committee. Therefore, I do not think much purpose will be served by going back to the old method.

Mr. Gujral has said that the Press Council is a useful institution. I agree that it is a valuable and necessary institution. Although it has no sanctions as such and cannot take legal action against erring journalists or newspapers, it can certainly warn and point out danger signals in the path of the freedom of the Press. It can tell the Government where they are going wrong and are corroding the freedom of the press and the freedom of expression of various individuals connected with the fourth estate in our democracy. I agree that the moral authority of the Press Council is very important and you must see to it that it is not only protected but further strengthened. To achieve this purpose, the Press Council should be an independent and objective body and its findings must always be accurate and impartial whenever it passes some strictures on a newspaper or Government.

We know that the Press Council idea was mooted on the basis of the Press Commission's report. It was taken from the British example. The British Press Council was constituted in 1953 and reconstituted in 1963. It consists of one Pay Chairman and 25 members. Our Press Council consists of one

Chairman and 26 members. This British example is unique in two respects. It will be interesting to note that the British Press Council has not come into existence to talk about the independence of and freedom of the press. I quote from the objectives of the British Press Council. It has been brought into existence "to preserve the established freedom of the British press". The freedom of the British press is already established for centuries and the Press Council has only to see that that established freedom is protected and further enhanced. But in our country, we have yet to establish the freedom of the Indian press and then talk about its enhancement. In England the Press Council is completely independent and is not a child of a statute of Parliament. I should have thought that here also the Press Council would have been an independent agency and not established by an Act of Parliament. But since it has already been established by an Act of Parliament, I see no purpose being served if the Press Council is attached to the Minister of Information and Broadcasting. We have seen that whoever is the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, he has been consistently carrying on the work of not so much informing the public but of telling in a dull manner and in a provocative manner what the ministers of the various departments are doing. From the time of Sardar Patel and Dr. Keskar onwards, I have found that wherever the Minister of Information and Broadcasting goes and whatever he does, it becomes part of the news, whether it has any significant news value or not and is broadcast in the news bulletin of the AIR. It only indicates the mentality and attitude of people who serve in the newspapers, radio and other mass media—they only want to flatter those in authority. If the Press Council is at all to be attached to any minister, it must be attached to the Minister of Education and Culture and not to the Minister of Information and Broadcasting because it has so far been more or less a propaganda machine of the Government of India.

[Shri P. G. Mavalankar]

I want to suggest that the British Press Council has been doing a good job because it is independent. If I had the time, I would have quoted extensively to substantiate this statement. Here I want to draw your attention to a very interesting article by Sir Linton Andrews, who was the Chairman of the British Press Council during the period 1955-59 and who incidentally was the former editor of the famous *Yorkshire Post*. He has said many interesting things in this article, which is published in the same book that I quoted earlier. My point is that the Press Council in England is functioning as not only an independent body but as an effective organ of protecting not only the freedom of the press but of enabling the citizens of Britain to have all information channels continuously free, whether governmental or non-governmental.

I want to see such a thing happening in this country.

But what do we see here? If you look at the Annual Report of the Press Council for the year 1972, you will be amazed to find the Chairman's observations at page 2:

"The experience of the Press Council in India has belied this fear"

—namely, that it has become a handmaid of the government—

The Chairman continues:

"Designed and constituted as an autonomous body, it has been absolutely independent"

—mark the words "absolutely independent"—

"and the fact that it is financed by Government has not in any manner detracted from its autonomy and independence. For this very happy state of affairs both the Council and the Government have to share the credit."

This may be the opinion of the Chairman but certainly it is not the opinion

shared by a vast majority of the people and certainly not by the opposition parties and the independent dissenters of this developing democracy.

In conclusion, if you look at the objects of the Press Council, there are two. The first object of the Council is to preserve the freedom of the press and to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India. Then it says:

* * * *

"(a) to help newspapers and news agencies to maintain their independence;

(e) to keep under review any development likely to restrict the supply and dissemination of news of public interest and importance."

My charge is that the Press Council has, by and large, not done this job of bringing it to the notice of the public at large in this country. The flow of information, which must be readily and rightly available to the people of this country, that has been restricted and impeded by governmental interference and the interference of the management.

Therefore, it is no use saying that it is a simple Bill, let the House pass it. We must go into this question. Times without number we find that many hon. Members of this House give notice of their intention to take part in a debate and you, Sir, in your wisdom allow them to participate in the debate. The member spends all his time and energy to collect all the material, does some research of his own and then makes a good speech which contains many good points. But he will be surprised to see the next day that it has not been given any coverage, or very little coverage, whereas the newspaper is full of the usual evasive speeches of the Ministers which convey nothing.

I want to suggest that a free democracy and an independent nation imply not only a free debate in Parliament

but also a free debate in the newspaper world. Therefore, I was a bit surprised when Shri Priya Ranjan Das Munsi said yesterday that the opposition must be more than grateful that it is getting at least some attention from the press. I want to make it very clear that we do not want to depend on the charity or mercy of any Government or any party, much less the party to which Shri Munsi belongs; We want to stand on our own rights. If we have something very important to suggest, something of value to suggest, even if it is a dissenting point of view, we must have the legitimate freedom to express it in the free press.

The Minister has said that there is no better Committee than the Committee which has been dissolved. If there is no better way of getting members for the new committee, let there be elections. If you are going to have nomination, I take it that it will be more or less pro-government and it is bound to be subservient to the government, which is certainly bad. Therefore, the best course would be to have independent elections. My hon. friend, Shri Ramavtar Shastri referred to the Federation of Working Journalists. I find that the National Union of Journalists has also been recognised by the Press Council. It has also been notified in the Gazette. So, let us not bring here these issues. The most important thing is that both the editors and journalists must have the right to express their views. They should be able to perform their functions independently and with purity and integrity.

Public opinion, as Gandhiji said, is the only force at the disposal of democracy. Therefore, if we want the public opinion to be strengthened and encouraged, we want a free press, an independent press.

The American President Thomas Jefferson was asked once, "What would you choose, a Government without the free press or a free press without the Government?" He immediately re-

plied, "I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying, a free press without the Government because, if a free press is there, then the chances are, 99 out of 100 cases, that with the help of a free press, free channels of information will be continuously flowing and a new Government can be formed."

I would say a last word that this Bill has come—you, Mr. Speaker, will be particularly distressed—in the form of an Ordinance and we are now asked to pass it. My criticism is: Was there really such an emergency? If the Government did know that the term of the Nominating Committee was coming to an end on September 30, 1973, why did they not bring forward this Bill during the last monsoon session? But the Government has got a habit of issuing Ordinances on minor matters and for ordinary things because they know that they can issue an Ordinance and get the Bill passed in Parliament.

Sir, I want to be with you in condemning the Government for using the Ordinance-issuing power like this for such minor matters.

MR. SPEAKER: The time has already been exceeded. The time fixed was 2 hours. We have exceeded the time by another 20 minutes. How much time will the Minister take?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): About 20 minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: All the parties have exhausted their time except the Congress party which has another list of 4 Members. You can have another half-an-hour added to it.

श्री मधु लिमये (वाका) इम बिल
के लिए समय बढ़ा दिया जाये।

MR. SPEAKER: I now call Shri B. V. Naik. We will accommodate Shri Dasaratha Deb just for a few minutes, only 4—5 minutes. Then, 5

[Mr. Speaker]

minutes each to 2 or 3 Members from the Congress side. I will adjust it. The Minister will take 20 minutes.

श्री मधु लिमये : मैं तीसरे वचन पर बोलना चाहता हूँ ।

MR. SPEAKER: Reading is the same, first or the third. If you have to speak, you better do it at the first reading rather than at the end.

श्री मधु लिमये : यह इस पर निर्भर करता है कि मंत्री महोदय क्या कहते हैं । शायद वे मेरी बातों को मान लें ।

MR. SPEAKER: The Members have referred to the Nominating Committee. I do not know whether it is proper for me to give the background because I am also one of the Members of the Nominating Committee. Many things have been said in my presence. It would have been much better if I had not been present here.

SHRI MADHU LIMAYE: Complimentary things have been said.

MR. SPEAKER: Very complimentary; very kind of you.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Imagine how much respect we have got for you.

MR. SPEAKER: I am very thankful to you. I am just a humble servant of the House.

What happened that the Nominating Committee was appointed, consisting of the Chief Justice of India, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha who happens to be the Vice President of India also and the Speaker. Out of them—I do not know whether they have any experience about journalism or not—I have been associated with journalism for a number of years. About 25 years before, I was an editor and I was a Member of the Press Advisory Committee. I was the founder-Member of the Federation of

Working Journalists. But there, we were all in the position of nominated Members, he as the Chairman, myself as the Speaker and the Chief Justice of India.

You had appointed this Committee through an Act in the belief that we would be very fair and very honest in what we do. When the whole material came, there were a number of considerations, regional considerations, of language papers, of English papers and then of small papers, medium papers and big papers. So many factors came before us.

Then, there were so many organisations of journalists—I forget the names of all of them. There were quite a few during my time, the All-India Newspapers Editors' Conference, the Working Journalists Federation and there were many other Federations which came into existence. They were all taken into consideration. In spite of the best efforts, it is sometimes impossible. But this Committee kept on sitting; it gave a chance to most of them; it heard them. Some may not have been heard. When this criticism came after the nomination, the Chief Justice of India said that, whatever be his position as a member, he was a member because he was the Chief Justice of India. Mr. Mavalankar made a very learned speech. He was saying that they were only as members of the Committee. They were members of the Committee because he was the Chief Justice of India and I was Speaker. The Chief Justice of India said that, if criticism came like this, it only showed that, perhaps, we were not very honest in our nomination. We tried to reconcile ourselves. But the Chief Justice said that it was very difficult. The analogy followed in respect of Speaker also. So, that is the background. It is not something that was done in a moment's heat. It was very well considered. However genuine the criticism may be, after all, criticism is criticism. This Committee was appointed to generate confidence, full

trust, in it. If they did not succeed in that, the only other alternative was that this Committee should be replaced by an alternative arrangement. Because you have been mentioning it since yesterday, I thought that, on behalf of my other two colleagues and myself, I should say as to how it came about.

श्री मधु लिमये : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस बारे में कुछ गलतफहमी है। मैं जरा सफाई कर देना चाहता हूँ। चीफ जस्टिस, चेयरमैन और स्पीकर के नाते आप लोगों के जो काम हैं, उन की आलोचना करना एक अलग बात है। चूँकि व्यक्ति वही हैं, तो इस का मतलब यह थोड़े ही है कि स्पीकर चेयरमैन या चीफ जस्टिस के नाते जो काम किये गये हैं, उन की आलोचना हुई है। वैसे खुदा के भक्त खुदा की भी आलोचना करते हैं। आलोचना से कौन मक्त है? हम को इतना सेन्सेटिव नहीं होनी चाहिए।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : सेन्सेटिव होने की बात नहीं है। यह कमेटी इस लिए बनाई गई थी कि ये तीन आदमी ठीक काम कर सकेंगे। इस में आज-कल के चीफ जस्टिस नहीं, उस वक़्त के चीफ जस्टिस, हिदायत-उल्ला साहब, थे। मैं तो बहुत खुश था कि मुझे प्रेस की सेवा करने का मौका मिला। लेकिन यह भी देखना पड़ता है कि कई बार क्रिटिसिज्म ट्रांसप्रेस कर जाती है और स्पीकर और वाइस-प्रेसिडेंट की भी क्रिटिसिज्म होती है। उन्होंने कुछ सोच कर ऐसा किया। मेरा खयाल है कि हम लोगों को इस्तीफा दिये हुए दो साल हो गये हैं। इस दौरान में इस बारे में कोई चर्चा नहीं चली। हम तीनों से किसी ने चर्चा नहीं की कि क्या बात थी। हम सब भी उम्मीद रखते थे कि प्रेस एसोसियेशन हम से बात करेंगी। लेकिन किसी ने बात नहीं की। हम भी चुप रहे, वे भी चुप रहे और सरकार भी चुप रही। अब जब कि यह बिल आया है, इस बारे में चर्चा हो रही है।

SHRI B. V. NAIK (Kanara): To the extent that you have intervened in the debate, some of the conclusions which I had thought of may have to be slightly revised because you have given a sort of a pep talk about what happened. But I would like to start off with the principal powers of the Press Council and whether the Press Council has done a good job in performing the duties as well as responsibilities that have been entrusted to them.

Sec. 13 of the Press Council Act reads:

"Where on receipt of a complaint made to it or otherwise....

I would underline the word 'otherwise'.

"...the Council has reason to believe that a newspaper or a news agency has offended against the standards of journalistic ethics or public taste and that an editor or a working journalist has committed any professional misconduct or a breach of the code of journalistic ethics, the Council, after giving the newspaper an opportunity, may censure its conduct."

Hon. Member, Shri Mavalankar, vehemently pleaded for the freedom of the press in our country and as usual he had to draw his inspiration from the White Hall, UK...

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Freedom is individual.

SHRI B. V. NAIK....in championing the freedom of the press in this country, whether it be freedom or whether we are going to term it as licence. I hope he will see the entire situation, not necessarily from the imported Anglo-Saxon point of view but from the point of view of Indian realities....

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: From the human point of view!

SHRI B. V. NAIK: Yes, also from human point of view and when we concede that Indians too are human-beings, it will apply to others also. I have quoted that case earlier and unfortunately, I have to revert back to it. That is the case of Miss Sumitra Desai which remained unresolved since it first started on 23rd May 1973, "Party pressure on arrests to tackle the scandal about the colleague", dated 24th May in *The Hindu* of Madras, a very respectable newspaper indeed. I will not go into the details. *Hindustan Times*, 26th May 1973.—'Mysore Minister quits over missing woman'. A very respectable paper indeed—the *Hindustan Times*. 27th May 1973, the same respectable paper, *The Hindu* of Madras—'Mysore Missing Woman Scandal'. In this the editor concludes: 'Should such an inquiry now set in motion fail to find the missing woman in the next few days and clear the mystery, a more thorough and independent investigation will become imperative.' This is what the Editor of *The Hindu* says.

MR. SPEAKER: What are you making out?

SHRI B. V. NAIK: Let me complete, Sir. Freedom of the Press against a Harijan Minister of the State of Mysore? *The Times of India*, dated 28th May 1973....

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: When atrocities are committed on the Harijans, you do not raise your voice.

SHRI B. V. NAIK: By whom? By the defenders of the freedom of the Press, the hon. Members of the Opposition. They are provoking me. 28th May 1973, the holiest of the holy press, *The Times of India* says: "Central leaders may have a role in the scandal". I think it does not include Mr. Gujral...

SHRI SHASHI BHUSHAN (South Delhi): It is politically motivated.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know how it is motivated. I am concerned only with the relevancy of the speech.

SHRI SHASHI BHUSHAN: It is the jute mill-owners. They are the owners of this press. They are against the Government. So they are doing it and they are stooges and are acting like this.

SHRI B. V. NAIK: The whole matter was again brought here on the 30th July when I begged of our colleagues, "Kindly don't blow it into a sort of a political scandal to topple the Ministry of Mr. Urs."

Some of our senior statesmen had no scruples to blow it up and cast aspersions on the Ministry of Home Affairs. On the 4th November the Patriot came out with the news that Sumitra Desai was identified. Is this the freedom of the Press to which we are owing our allegiance. It is a great shame in the annals of journalistic history that the freedom of the press in this country should be so grossly abused so that a helpless Harijan backward-class Minister in the State of Mysore is booted out of his job, and then, after six months she is identified. Not a single responsible paper has come out with an apology about it; they have not expressed their personal apologies to a man whose innocence has been destroyed.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chirayinkil): That is the point, Sir.

श्री एस० ए० शमीम (श्रीनगर) : क्या कमाल है ?

श्री मधु लिमये : इसका इस से क्या सम्बन्ध है ?

श्री बी०बी०नायक : इस का सम्बन्ध है । अगर आप को हो जाता तो आप समझते ।

श्री मधु लिमये : आप इस पर अलग बहस कीजिए ।

SHRI B. V. NAIK: It is not for me to sit in Judgement on the Press in this country. But what I wish respectfully to point out is only this. What has the Press Council been doing? Should not the Press Council take appropriate action in the case of these over-blown-up, exaggerated statements and pull up these papers, at least to give them censure, to pull up the news agencies who are involved in it? Since you started about the background, I thought of offering certain alternatives for the purpose of reconstituting this Committee. But I leave it to your good sense as well as the Minister to constitute an appropriate Committee.

श्री मुहम्मद जमीलुर्रहमान (किशनगंज): मोहतरिम स्पीकर साहब, आईने हिन्द के मुताबिक

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह एक छोटा सा बिल है लेकिन इस का स्कोप बढ़ाते बढ़ाते आपने बहुत बढ़ा दिया

It is a simple amendment. I saw the Debate yesterday evening and I have been hearing the debate since this morning also. This is a simple question relating to extension of the Members' term, and the Chairman's term.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: This is an occasion to speak, Sir.

श्री मुहम्मद जमीलुर्रहमान : मोहतरिम स्पीकर साहब, आईने हिन्द के मुताबिक इस बात की आजादी है, इस बात की जमानत दी गई है हर शहरी को बोलने की, लिखने की और अपने ख्यालात की इजहार करने की उस को पूरी आजादी दी गई है, इस में कोई दो राय नहीं है बशर्ते कि मुल्क की सल्मियत बरकरार रहे और उस को कोई खतरा न हो। प्रेस काउंसिल ऐक्ट का कयाम अमल में आया और उस के तहत मुल्क की मुमताज हस्तियों यानी राज्य सभा के चेयरमैन, बहसियत लोक सभा के स्पीकर के आप और चीफ जस्टिस हिन्दुस्तान के, उस के मेम्बरस हुए

जो कि नामिनेशन के लिये मुन्तखिब किये गये थे। हस्ब कानून कमेटी ने दावत दी मुह्तलिफ इदारों के लोगो को।

लेकिन सवाल यह है कि 1971 की अक्तूबर में जो प्रेस काउन्सिल ऐक्ट अमल में आया उस के बाद कितना काम हुआ है? मुल्क में बोलने और लिखने की आजादी है और इजहार ख्यालात की आजादी है इसलिए प्रेस काउन्सिल का कयाम अमल में आया, और अगर किसी ने तनकीद की, गलत ही सही, तो मेरे ख्याल में इस में सुधार लाना चाहिए था, न कि इस्तीफा देना चाहिए था। एक बात जरूर है कि रेजिगनेशन देने से जो ग्रमेंडमेंट लाया गया है उस में कितना वक्त ज्यादा खर्च हुआ और इस कटौती के, इकोनामी के जमाने में, जब मुल्क पर इक्तसादी मुश्किलात पड़ी हैं, इस में जो खर्चा पड़ा है, उन तनकीदों का बिना लिहाज किये हुए उस को नजरदाज कर देना चाहिए था।

बहरहाल प्रेस काउन्सिल का जो कयाम, अमल में आया है उस ने अच्छा काम किया और यह कहना बिल्कुल गलत होगा, जैसा कि कल कुछ लोगों ने कहा, कि इस का काम तसल्लीबख्श नहीं हुआ है, ठीक नहीं हुआ है, यह गलत है। हाँ, यह ठीक है कि 1971 के बाद से कुछ चन्द अखबार वाले हमारी पार्टी का हो या हमारे लीडर का हो, उनकी बातों को अपने अखबारों में तोड़ मरोड़ कर पेश करते हैं, और गलत तरीके से सारी बातों को पेश किया है, यह बात नहीं होनी चाहिए।

मैं अर्ज कर रहा था कि प्रेस काउन्सिल एक स्टैट्यूटरी बॉडी नहीं है, जो कि होना चाहिए। इस पर मंत्री महोदय ध्यान दें। छोटे अखबारों की हालत कतई अच्छी नहीं है। आप जनाब, खुद जानते हैं, क्योंकि आप अखबारों की खिदमत कर चुके हैं, छोटे अखबारों की कितनी खराब हालत है

[श्री मुहम्मद जमीलुर्रहमान]

चाहे वह अखबार किसी भी लैंग्वेज के हो—
चाहे उर्दू के हों, तमिल के हों, तेलगू के हों,
हिन्दी के हों, गुरुमुखी के हों, उन की हालत
अच्छी नहीं है। तो अर्ज यह है कि उन के
जर्नलिस्टों को ज्यादा से ज्यादा नुमाइन्दगी
और हक मिलने चाहिए ताकि सही मानों में
जो छोटे अखबार मुल्क के कोने कोने में
पहुँचते हैं वह अवाम की राय की तर्जुमानी
करें। बड़े अखबार अवाम की राय की
तर्जुमानी नहीं करते और उन के वेस्टड
इंटरैस्ट्स होते हैं। इसलिए मेरी गुजारिश
है कि छोटे अखबारों पर ज्यादा ध्यान देना
चाहिए। उन को टेलीप्रिन्टर की फ़ैसिलिटी
होनी चाहिए, जैसे कि बड़े अखबारों को
है।

जमा मैंने पहले भी कहा था, छोटे
अखबारों के लिए एक फ़ाइनैन्स कोरपोरेशन
बनना चाहिए। फिल्मों के लिए फ़ाइनैन्स
कोरपोरेशन बन सकता है लेकिन वह इदारा
जो कौम की खिदमत करता है और जम्हूरियत
के लिए लाजिमी है, उस के लिए कोरपोरेशन
नहीं बन सका। पिछले बजट सेशन के मौके
पर सदरे जम्हूरियत ने अपनी तकरीर में कहा
था कि स्माल और मीडियम न्यूज पेपर्स
फ़ाइनैन्स कोरपोरेशन बिल तैयार है और
वह भाने वाला है। लेकिन एक साल
हो चुका है अभी तक वह फ़ाइनैन्स कोर-
पोरेशन छोटे अखबारों के लिए नहीं आया
है। इस पर मंत्री महोदय को ध्यान देना
चाहिए।

कल मैंने लोगों की तकरीरें सुनीं, डा०
लक्ष्मीनारायण पांडेय ने कहा कि प्रेस काउन्सिल
ने कोई काम नहीं किया, फिर या प्रेस ऐक्ट से
कोई फ़ायदा नहीं हुआ। हां बड़े बड़े अखबारों
की फ़ायदे की जो बात होती है उस में भले
ही हमारा समर्थन न हो, लेकिन छोटे अखबारों
का ज्यादा से ज्यादा फ़ायदा हो, उन के
लोगों को ज्यादा नुमाइन्दगी मिले, उन का

ज्यादा ख्याल रखा जाय, यह बात तो होनी
चाहिए। प्रेस काउन्सिल ऐक्ट और भी
मजबूत होना चाहिए ताकि मुल्क के अवाम
की जिन्दगी के साथ बड़े अखबार न खेलें।
(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मिनिस्टर की सारे
दिन की सजा नहीं है कि वह अकड़ कर बैठ
रहे। मेम्बर उन से बात करने आते हैं।
आप सही रास्ते पर आयेगे तो आप को भी
मौका दिया जायगा। तब देखेंगे आप
कैसे बैठते हैं।

श्री मुहम्मद जमीलुर्रहमान : जम्हू-
रियत के जमाने में अखबार की कितनी जरूरत
है, इस से इन्कार नहीं किया जा सकता।
इसलिए इस मिलसिले में एक निहायत
मुनासिब और मुकामिल बिल लाने की
जरूरत है। प्रेस की आजादी जो कि
डेमोक्रेसी के लिए जरूरी है उस की हिफ़ाजत
करने के लिए एक कमप्लीट बिल लाया जाय
ताकि यह न हो कि छोटे अखबार वालों
के साथ इन्साफ़ न हो सके। प्रेस काउन्सिल
को इफ़ेक्टिव बनाने के लिए फ़ाइनैन्स कोर-
पोरेशन बहुत जरूरी है। उस के बग़ैर
प्रेस काउन्सिल ऐक्ट बना देने से मसला
हल नहीं होगा। छोटे अखबारों का मसला
हल नहीं होता।

आखिर में मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि अखबार
भी अपनी जिम्मेदारी को निभायेंगे। ऐसे
दौर में, इन्हताती दौर में जिस से कि भारत
गुजर रहा है, अखबार वालों को वक्त
के मुताबिक अपने को ढालना है और समाज
का साथ देना होगा। प्रेस काउन्सिल ऐक्ट
में मुनासिब तब्दीली लायें जिस से समाज
की खिदमत हो सके और अखबार वाले
अपनी जिम्मेदारी को निभा सकें।

[شہر مہتمم جمیل الرحمان:]

(کفن لکچر): مخترم سہکر صاحب-
آئین ہلد کے مطابق اس بات کی

آزادی ہے، اس بات کی ضمانت دی گئی ہے۔ ہر شہری کو بولنے کی لکھنے کی۔ اور اپنے خیالات کا اظہار کرنے کی پوری آزادی ہے۔ اس میں کوئی دو رائے نہیں ہیں۔ بشرط کہ ملک کی سالمیت برقرار رہے اور اس کو کوئی خطرہ نہ ہو۔ پریس کونسل ایکٹ کا قیام عمل میں آیا۔ اور اس کے تحت ملک ممتاز ہسٹینس میں راجپہ سبھا کے چیئرمین۔ بحیثیت لوک سبھا کے سیکریٹری کے آپ اور چیف جسٹس ہندوستان کے اس کے میمبرز ہوئے۔ جو کہ نو مینٹیشن کے لئے منتخب کئے گئے تھے۔ جب قاتون کمیشن نے دعوت دی منتخب اداروں کے لوگوں کو۔

لیکن سوال یہ ہے کہ ۱۹۷۱ کی اکتوبر میں جی پریس کونسل ایکٹ عمل میں آیا اس کے بعد کتنا کام ہوا ہے ملک میں بولنے اور لکھنے کی آزادی ہے۔ اور اظہار خیالات کی آزادی ہے۔ اس لئے پریس کونسل کا قیام عمل میں آیا۔ اور اگر کسی نے تنقید کی؟ غلط میں سہی۔ تو میرے خیال میں اس میں سدھار لانا چاہئے تھا۔ ناکہ استیفاء دینا چاہئے تھا۔ ایک بات ضرور ہے کہ ریجیٹریشن دینے سے جو امپڈمنٹ لایا گیا ہے اس میں کتنا وقت زیادہ خرچ ہوا اور اس کمیٹی کے اکنومی کے زمانے میں جب ملک پر اقتصادی مشکلات

ہوئی ہیں اس میں جو خرچہ پڑا ہے۔ ان تنقیدوں کا ہذا لحاظ کئے ہوئے اس کو نظر انداز کر دینا چاہئے تھا۔ بصر حال پریس کونسل کا جو قیام عمل میں آیا ہے اس نے اچھا کام کیا، اور یہ کہنا بالکل غلط ہوگا جیسا کہ کل کچھ لوگوں نے کہا کہ اس کا کام تسلی بخش نہیں ہوا ہے۔ ٹھیک نہیں ہوا ہے۔ یہ غلط ہے۔ ہاں یہ ٹھیک ہے کہ ۱۹۷۱ کے بعد یہ کچھ جلد اخبار والے ہماری پارٹی کا ہویا ہمارے لہجہ کا ہو ان کی باتوں کو اپنے اخباروں میں توڑ مروڑ کر پھینک دیتے ہیں اور غلط طریقہ سے ساری باتوں کو پھینک دیتے ہیں یہ بات نہیں ہونی چاہئے

میں عرض کر رہا تھا کہ پریس کونسل ایک سنگم پر پہنچی ہے جو کہ ہونا چاہئے۔ اس پر ملتی ہوئی دھیان دیں۔ چھوٹے اخباروں کی حالت قطعی اچھی نہیں ہے۔ آپ جذبات خود جانتے ہیں۔ کیونکہ آپ اخباروں کی خدمت کر چکے ہیں۔ چھوٹے اخباروں کی لیکن خراب حالت ہے۔ چاہے وہ اخبار کسی کی زبان کے ہوں۔ چاہے اردو کے ہوں۔ تامل کے ہوں۔ تہلگو کے ہوں۔ ہندی کے ہوں۔ گورکھی کے ہوں۔ ان کی حالت اچھی نہیں ہے۔ تو عرض یہ ہے کہ ان کے جرنلسٹوں کو زیادہ سے زیادہ نمائندگی اور حق

[شری محمد جمیل الرحمان]

ملیہ جامعیٹس تاکہ صحیح معنوں میں جو چھوٹے اخبار ملک کے کوئے کوئے میں پہنچتے ہیں وہ عوام کی رائے کی ترجمانی کریں۔ بڑے اخبار عوام کی رائے کی ترجمانی نہیں کرتے۔ اور ان کے ویسٹڈ انٹریسٹ ہوتے ہیں، اس لئے میری گزارش ہے کہ چھوٹے اخباروں پر زیادہ دھیان دینا چاہئے۔ ان کو تھالی پرنٹر کی سہولیت ہونی چاہئے جیسے کہ بڑے اخباروں کو ہے۔

جب میں نے پہلے بھی کہا تھا چھوٹے اخباروں کے لئے ایک فائلیٹس کورپوریشن بنانا چاہئے۔ فلموں کے لئے فائلیٹس کورپوریشن بن سکتا ہے۔ لیکن وہ ادارہ جو قوم کی خدمت کرتا ہے اور جمہوریت کے لئے لازمی ہے اس کے لئے کورپوریشن نہیں بن سکتا۔ پچھلے بجٹ سیشن کے موقع پر صدر جمہوریہ نے ایلی تقریر میں کہا تھا کہ شمال اور میڈیم نیوز پیپرز فائلیٹس کورپوریشن بن تیار ہے اور وہ آنے والا ہے لیکن ایک سال ہو چکا ہے ابھی تک وہ فائلیٹس کورپوریشن چھوٹے اخباروں کے لئے نہیں آیا۔ اس پر ملٹری مہودے کو دھیان دینا چاہئے۔

کل میں نے لوگوں کی تقریریں سنیں۔ ڈاکٹر لکشمی نارائن پانڈے نے کہا کہ پریس کونسل نے کوئی کام نہیں کیا۔ یا پریس ایکٹ سے کوئی فائدہ نہیں۔ ہاں۔ بڑے اخباروں کو فائدے کی جو بات ہوتی ہے اس میں بھلے ہی ہمارا سمرٹھن نہ ہوے لیکن چھوٹے اخباروں کا زیادہ سے زیادہ فائدہ ہو۔ ان کے لوگوں کو زیادہ نانڈگی ملے۔ ان کا زیادہ خیال رکھا جائے۔ یہ بات تو ہونی چاہئے۔ پریس

کونسل ایکٹ اور بھی مضبوط ہونا چاہئے تاکہ ملک کے عوام کی زندگی کے ساتھ بڑے اخبار نہ کھلیں۔

ادھیکش مہودے۔ ملسٹر کی سارے دن کی سزا نہیں ہے۔ کہ وہ اگر کر بیٹھا رہے۔ مومیر ان سے بات کرنے آتے ہوں۔ آپ صحیح راستے پر ٹینگے تو آپ کو بھی موقع دیا جائے گا۔ تب دیکھیں گے کہ آپ کیسے بوٹھتے ہیں۔

شری محمد جمیل الرحمان۔ جمہوریہ کے زمانے میں اخبار کی کٹلی ضرورت ہے اس سے انکار نہیں کیا جاسکتا۔ اس لئے اس سلسلے میں ایک نہایت مناسب اور مکمل بل لانے کی ضرورت ہے۔ پریس کی آزادی جو کہ قیود پر مبنی ہے اس کی حفاظت کرنے کے لئے ایک مکمل بل لایا جائے۔ تاکہ یہ نہ ہو کہ چھوٹے اخبار والوں کے ساتھ انصاف نہ ہو سکے۔ پریس کونسل کو موثر بنانے کے لئے فائلیٹس کورپوریشن بہت ضروری ہے۔ اس کے بغیر پریس کونسل ایکٹ بنا دینے سے مسئلہ حل نہیں ہوگا۔ چھوٹے اخباروں کا مسئلہ ختم نہیں ہوتا۔

آخر میں میں کہنا چاہوں گا کہ اخبار بھی ایلی ذمے داری نہہانگے۔ ایسے دور میں جس سے کہ بھارت گزر رہا ہے۔ اخبار والوں کو وقت کے مطابق اپنے کو ڈھالنا ہے اور سماج کا ساتھ دینا ہوگا۔ پریس کونسل ایکٹ میں مناسب تبدیلی لائیں۔ جس سے سماج کی خدمت ہو سکے اور اخبار والے ایلی ذمہ داری کو نبھا سکیں۔

SHRI DASARATHA DEB (Tripura East): The hon. Minister says that this Bill is a simple one. It has been said also that some criticism has been made regarding the nominating committee and this Bill has been brought forward in view of that. I would submit that actually criticism has been made against the members and chairman of the Press Council. I do not understand how it can be regarded as criticism against the nominating committee. After the persons are nominated by the nominating committee, the press council might do many damaging things; that would not be the responsibility of the people who are nominating them. That would be precisely the function of the press council only, and people can rightly criticise their functioning. The nominating committee consisting of the Speaker and others may nominate the Members, but after the persons are nominated to the press council, their functioning is their responsibility, and criticism has rightly been made that their functioning has not been up to the mark which our country had expected of them. So, I submit that this Bill is not so simple.

In the Statement of Objects and Reasons, Government have said that the term of the officers was to expire by September, and they wanted to consult with the Members of the Opposition and other people so that they would suitably amend the Act and that is why they have already promulgated the ordinance, and they have now come forward with this Bill to replace the Ordinance and extend the term of the press council up to June, 1974.

I submit that this is a very wrong thing on the part of the Government. I understand that some Members had resigned long before. Surely, the situation which was developing must have been within the knowledge of the Government. So, why should Government not have come forward earlier with a suitable amending Bill in Parliament after consultations with

the Members of Parliament and others? We find that they slept till the last moment, and suddenly when the term was just about to expire, they promulgated an ordinance to extend the term. This has become the habit of this Government, namely to extend the life of any Act by means of an ordinance and then come forward in the House with a Bill to replace the ordinance and try to get it accepted by the House.

13.00 hrs.

Apart from this, I want to say something on other matters. The functioning of the Press Council is not satisfactory; there is no doubt about it. This is so particularly in regard to the distribution of newsprint quota to the small newspapers. There is a newsprint shortage everywhere. These small newspapers are not getting their quota. Particularly in my State, Tripura, there are so many complaints from newspapers that they are not getting newsprint quota. They do not receive any reply even to their letters. This thing is going on.

If any criticism is made against the functioning of the Press Council, I do not understand how it can be construed as a criticism of the body which nominated the Press Council. In the name of not exposing these high dignitaries, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, you are now trying to curb criticism of the actual functioning of the Press Council. I do agree that the nominating committee should be kept outside criticism, but the Council should not be made above any criticism. If they do something wrong, that must be the subject of criticism. Our Indian people must enjoy that freedom; the press must enjoy that freedom. Otherwise, you are not developing democracy in this country. It is a bad idea to encourage this sort of curb on people's freedom.

[Shri Dasaratha Deb]

Coming to the newsprint shortage, why are we having this shortage? We are not short of raw materials in the country. There is shortage of newsprint because we have not built up the paper industry in the country. This should not be left in the hands of individuals and foreign producers, Government should come forward and take over all the paper factories and develop newsprint production in the country. Very recently in the west coast, in a paper factory, where 500 workers were working, unnecessarily a lockout was declared for 50 days. Government failed to intervene. As a result of this, thousands of people have suffered. The Government should have intervened, taken over the factory and run it under government control.

In India, there is no shortage of bamboo and other raw materials. These are available in the eastern sector. If Government take it up and develop newsprint production, the country may become self-sufficient in paper production. But Government is reluctant to do it. That is why I suggest that Government should start paper factories under their control.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a different matter.

SHRI DASARATHA DEB: Secondly, Government must see that weightage is given to the small newspapers so that they are able to run their papers satisfactorily.

MR. SPEAKER: I can accommodate two or three members, starting with Shri Mahajan. After that, the Minister will reply.

13.04 hrs.

RE. BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

—Contd.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): I heard there was a discussion about postponing the motion standing in my

name concerning the ICAR. I am agreeable to accommodate my friends on the other side, though they have set up only a party committee and not a national committee to accord a reception to the distinguished foreign dignitary visiting our country.

MR. SPEAKER: We cannot postpone your motion of today if you are not agreeable.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: I was willing to accommodate them. I was saying they have set up a party committee with the General Secretary of the Congress Party as the Secretary and the President of their Party as the Chairman. Since it is a party meeting, how can I go there?

MR. SPEAKER: Just to accommodate your request I am postponing the discussion. I think we should accommodate it. This might be postponed to some other day. It is all right?

We are very much afraid of you.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH): It may be postponed to tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: We have already decided before the hon. Member came, but there were different reasons other than the reasons he has mentioned.

SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH: We can have it tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: We can decide it later on; it depends on the business that is coming tomorrow.

SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH: It is for your consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: We will see.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: It will be better if it is tomorrow.