

**MOTOR VEHICLES (AMENDMENT)
BILL**

AS PASSED BY RAJYA SABHA

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I lay on the Table of the House the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 1976, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

12.03 hrs.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHTH REPORT**

SHRI H. N. MUKHERJEE (Calcutta—North-East): I beg to present the Hundred and eighty-eighth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in their Hundred and Sixty-eighth Report on Directorate of Estates (Ministry of Works and Housing).

12.04 hrs.

**STATEMENT RE. RE-STRUCTURING
OF NEWS AGENCIES**

MR. SPEAKER: Statement by Minister, Shri V. C. Shukla.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): May I lay it on the Table?

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA (Jainagar): It is very important. He should read it.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): We can wait for 5 minutes. It is very important. He should read it.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: The adequacy of coverage and the quality of news-service rendered by the existing four teleprinter agencies in the country have been under study for some time. Newspapers are an important medium for the education of the people and the growth of national consciousness. The scope and the complexion of news depend to a large extent on the services received from the news-agencies. Newspapers

in India, specially language papers and medium and small papers, are at present not able to reflect adequately the events and developments in Indian life and the aspiration of the people, because the existing news-system in the country has not been able to provide, such service. Our news-system has also not been able to project to the world outside a proper image of the country, with the result that several foreign news agencies or newspapers, which generally toe the political line of their respective governments, have had a free field to malign India.

One of the main reasons why coverage and the standard of news-service have not improved is because the agencies have been starved of resources. The PTI and UNI mainly belong to the big newspapers themselves, several of whom are controlled by certain business houses. They have never provided to these agencies the resources required for creating an all-pervasive and efficient network for collection and dissemination of news. The multiplicity of agencies has only resulted in duplication of efforts, out of resources that were already meagre. The number of their offices is totally inadequate in the country and negligible outside. The salaries of the whole-time reporters are low and in some cases not paid regularly. Out of the total cost incurred in production of newspapers, only 105 per cent is paid to the news agencies.

The agencies are, therefore, supported and subsidized heavily through public funds. Loans of over Rs. 60 lakhs have been advanced to these agencies and a heavy recurring assistance flows through liberal subsidies on teleprinter and telegraph charges. In the case of one agency, almost the entire share-capital has been provided by State Governments. The standard of news-service as explained earlier, has not justified this investment and expenditure out of public funds.