12·23 hrs.

DEMANDS* FOR GRANTS—contd.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING—*contd.*

**Mr. Speaker:** The House will now take up further discussion and voting on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

**The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Shrimati Indira Gandhi):** Shri Hem Barua, in opening this debate, compared the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to an empire. It is certainly true that through our mass media we are in constant touch with a very large number of people all over the country. The UNESCO Constitution says that wars begin in the minds of men, but so do all other ideas like love of country, the urge to work, the necessity for mutual understanding, the determination for unity. Therefore, the task before the Ministry is not only one of giving information to the public or putting specific problems before it, but also of creating a mental atmosphere. Here I must hasten to assure the hon. Members that we do not believe in having any kind of conformity, we believe in trying to encourage mature thought which can come only through flexibility of mind and awakening of curiosity.

A developing country, especially one of the size of India, faces enormous problems, difficulties and pressures, and therfore needs to have a new approach in its mass media. Family planning, the food problem, the need for greater production etc., must all be dealt with taking into account the mental blockages, superstitions and traditions of the people which exist in different parts of the country. To gain the trust of the people, we must keep in touch with the thoughts which stir them. The Ministry is there to project the policies of the Government and to elucidate them. But I am very conscious of the fact that the media units should not become mere purveyors of Government bulletins. They must face the challenge of becoming live and imaginative communication links between our far-flung and diverse people and to try to draw the people into the process of the growth of the country, to help to make them more constructive and more informed participants in nation-building activities. We must try and create intellectual cement which will hold the people together no matter what the crisis, no matter what the provocation.

The view that my Ministry has a role to play in the shaping of the national mind is one which has been voiced by many hon. Members, and by Shri Vidyalankar who has special knowledge of the Ministry because of the hard work put in by his committee and the very valuable suggestions made by it. Many of these suggestions have already been implemented, others are in the process of being implemented, and the few remaining ones are under consideration.

I shall now try to deal with some of the points raised in the debate, but in the short time at my disposal, it may not be possible to mention every item. However, I should like to assure the hon. Members that I have noted all the points, and shall look into them carefully, and also that we are always available for further suggestions.

The need for increased import of newsprint and for better conditions for staff artistes and others are matters about which we ourselves have been deeply anxious. Regarding newsprint, nobody would be happier than if it were possible to ensure satisfaction to all the demands for additional quotas. However, hon. Members are well aware of our foreign exchange difficulties, and also the fact that neither the allocation of foreign exchange nor the import of newsprint lies within the purview of this Ministry. The newspaper industry itself can help in easing the

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.

situation by voluntary co-operation in two directions.

Firstly, representative organisations of the industry can help to reduce, if not eliminate, misuse of newsprint. I do not know whether this is true or not, but Members themselves are aware that there is a wide belief, which has been expressed in this House and the other House also, in the existence of this malpractice. This kind of rumour going around vitiates the atmosphere.

Secondly, the industry can help by voluntary adoption of the price page schedule which was based on the formula submitted by the industry itself. Such co-operation would considerably strengthen the case of the press.

We are unhappy about the persistence of monopolies in the newspaper industry, and believe that this is harmful to the growth of a truly free and representative press. The Monopolies Commission is being asked to consider this matter and to advise us.

Newspapers have become a big industry requiring enormous financial outlay even at the initial stages. This raises difficulties for the small and the regional newspapers. However, regional backwardness is also responsible for hampering the growth of such papers. The Ministry is doing what it can to help, and we are awaiting the report of the Diwakar Committee in August for further guidance in this matter.

Regarding staff artistes, some steps have already been taken which should go a long way in alleviating their hardships. All new appointments after 1st October, 1964, are on a five-year basis; action is being taken to apply the same rule to those who were in service earlier. There are over 1,800 staff artistes, and it will take a little time to execute the new contracts formally. All the allowances admissible to Government servants are being paid to them.

The formation and recognition of the Staff Artistes Association was viewed sympathetically by my Ministry. However, according to a new order, we have to await the finalisation of rules by the Ministry of Home Affairs for the recognition of Service Associations. There are other associations such as the Class I Engineering Officers and the Association of Ministerial Staff of All India Radio which are in the same position. Many hon. Members pointed out, and we ourselves are fully aware of our dependence on the staff artistes, and we are grateful to them for the many years of loyal service which they have put in.

We are also considering proposals for improving the scales of pay of the monitoring service which some hon. Members mentioned. An hon. Member mentioned the discrepancy in the payscales of Hindi and English typists and stenographers. I have found out on enquiry at the Ministry that there is no such discrimination.

Specific quotas for members of the Scheduled Castes in various categories of staff are prescribed by Government and these are reflected in the staffing pattern of AIR's regular services. Sometimes we are unable to find the right persons and in this case we keep the posts vacant.

There was some criticism of our Publications Division. On checking our Publications Division, we found that there was a physical verification in 1961 and again in 1963-64. The percentage of shortage comes to less than half per cent which is considered rather low since the publishers make an allowance up to five per cent shortage for an edition. We found on checking that the Publications Division is in an extremely cramped position. I would very much like to invite hon. Members to go and see this for themselves, and if possible, to help us to obtain greater accommodation.

**Shri Hem Barua** (Gauhati): That is no justification.

**Shrimati Indira Gandhi:** I am not justifying it. I have already said that we have had a physical verification and that the shortage is less than half percent. But it is true that efficiency suffers in all directions when you are so cramped for space, both working space and storage space.

**Shri Vishram Prasad** (Lalganj): How much money does that half percent amount to?

**Shrimati Indira Gandhi:** I will let him know later. An hon. Member from the South mentioned that Tamil and Telugu programmes are being announced in Hindi. This is not quite correct. All programmes are announced in the regional language of the relevant broadcast. The only exception is Vividh Bharati, which is an all-India service and in which the items are very briefly introduced in simple Hindi. Shri Prakash Vir Shastri's concern for Hindi is genuine and valid. While he can urge us to move faster in having more Hindi programmes, I think it is unfair of him to accuse us of not implementing Government's policies in this regard. The Ministry is fortunate that besides other officials, it has a Secretary and a Joint Secretary who are both scholars and well-versed in Hindi and Sanskrit.

Yesterday, we had the amusing spectacle of Congress Members accusing All India Radio of giving more time to the Opposition and the Opposition saying that it is being ignored by All India Radio. I think this in itself goes to prove that we are taking a balanced view.

**Shri Hem Barua:** If there is a bias for Opposition, it is a bias for talent.

**Shrimati Indira Gandhi:** The House will probably remember that in 1957, the AIR had offered the leaders of the Opposition parties to broadcast before the elections, and this offer was rejected by them. However, soon after my assuming charge of this Ministry, I issued orders that we should have debates and discussions on both controversial and other matters by people of differing viewpoints. I believe some such programmes have already taken place and others are being planned. Instructions were also issued—I am mentioning this because this point was also raised by hon. Members—that we should not publicise individual Ministers unless their statements were of national importance of real news value.

There has been criticism both of the inadequacy of our internal stations and the weakness of our external services. In both these respects, the Ministry has perhaps not done as much as it should have or as much as we would like to do. But it is doing its best now to strengthen our internal and external programmes both by improving the programmes and by installing new stations and additional auxiliary centres as well as low-power medium-wave transmitters which will cover a number of cities all over the country. Some hon. Members mentioned Calicut and also Kutch. Calicut was already commissioned some time ago and should be put in soon. Kutch is included in the new programme. I am sure that hon. Members who have asked for other towns will realise that first importance must be given to the border areas.

One hon. Member called the International Film Festival a fiasco and wondered why this was not cancelled as was the Music Festival. The reason is quite simple. The invitations were issued before I became Minister, and as this was an international event it was not possible to withdraw it. It is true that in the film festival there was some confusion. This was due partly to certain genuine mistakes on our part and partly to causes beyond our control. However, whatever else this film festival could be called, it can certainly not be called a fiasco. I do not have the time to go into the details here but the House will be interested to know that the Britisher who spoke here was not trying to be sarcastic. I have met him since and he has spoken to film audiences in England. Similar

praise has been given by other distinguished people from the film world who have long experience of international film events. Not only have these people written to us, to the Ministry, and to me personally, but they have printed their comments in journals in their own countries. The latest one that I saw just a few days ago was a cutting from a Japanese periodical, recommending this type of festival to its own film industry.

Shri Karni Singhji mentioned films on family planning. We have made eight films and one of these—it was a colour cartoon—was adjudged the best documentary in the Commonwealth Awards, 1964, recently held by the Royal Society of Arts, in London. Six more short films are under production. Those interested in the Films Division will be glad to know that we are trying to revitalise the whole division and are expecting an expert from UNESCO to help us in this.

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy's praise was rather embarrassing.

**Shrimati Yashoda Reddy** (Kurnool): I was referring to her visit to Madras and her performance here.

**Shrimati Indira Gandhi:** With regard to her suggestions that some films should be shown free to children, I must tell her that the showing of feature films in the States comes within the purview of the State Governments and we have no say in this matter. I would like to assure the House that we are taking considerable measures to revitalise the whole Ministry and all our media units. I wold like to tell them now something about our future programmes. For strengthening the external services, two high-power shortwave transmitters will be in service in Delhi early next year, and one, 1,000 kw mediumwave transmitter wil be provided for night-time coverage to countries in North and South-East Asia.

Here again, I think it was Shri Hem Barua who said that it is like a case where one who was going to marry a girl of 16, was offered two girls of eight years each or some such thing.

**Shri Hem Barua:** That waa s question put to the hon. Speaker.

**Shrimati Indira Gandhi:** I would like to assure him . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** I assured him that such a question would not be put to me only!

**Shrimati Indira Gandhi:** I would like to assure him that this suggestion that we shall have two transmitters of 500 kw each was given by our own technical men because they thought that they would not only be equally powerful and effective as the other, but, at the same time, since the parts would be interchangeable, if one went out of order, the other one could be kept going, and so, it would be easier.

**Shri Hem Barua:** My argument was that when we want a 1000 KW medium wave transmitter, two 500 KW transmitters could not serve our original purpose of counteracting the Chinese propaganda in regions where our voices are not heard.

**Shrimati Indira Gandhi:** We left this to the experts and their advice was that we should ask for two 500 KW transmitters. Those who have offered us the transmitters are willing to give us one or the other. They are not making any demands about this.

We have decided to set up a Directorate of Farm and Home Broadcasting and a Directorate of Listener Research. Additional foreign exchange will be released, I may assure the House, for the manufacture of a large number of low-cost transistor sets. The possibility of charging a lower licence fee of Rs. 5 on low-cost radio and transistor sets is being investigated by the Finance Ministry. 35 per cent of new radio sets are now being manufactured by cottage industry here. The third plan target of 0.8 million sets is likely to be reached before long.

With regard to the News Section, we have decided to set up six new regional News units. Our endeavour is to build up a news unit at each radio station. Bureaux of Information are

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

being set up—one in the west for Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and one in the East for Assam, NEFA and Nagaland Border publicity is being strengthened by additional mobile field publicity and increased activity, including 7 training centres of our song and drama unit. Community Radio schemes should be extended to cities and bigger towns, especially to cover the poorer localities. In Delhi, we have found that the wire broadcasting service has been useful for the lower middle-class sector.

It is only through radio that people living in isolated areas can come directly into contact with the more dynamic minds of the country and it is this idea which is prompting our interest in television also, that is, to make available the best teaching, especially in those subjects which may require expensive equipment, to municipal and other average schools.

As I said earlier, we hope to extend it also to farm programmes and family planning programmes.

We should very much like to have the active participation of young people in our work and are planning special youth programmes to introduce young scientists, artists, writers, farmers and as Shrimati Ramdulari Sinha suggested, trade union workers. We believe that artists should be drawn from as wide a sector as possible, and that utmost encouragement should be given for free discussion. A more meaningful democracy can be built up through broadcast discussions on local issues by village leaders. Progressive farmers and other local personalities from throughout the district could provide effective stimulus to agricultural improvement. We are also exploring the possibility of a national system of district broadcasting.

Hon. members are aware that we have decided to expand the Delhi television to provide a daily service for about two hours. This is in addition to the services which are now in operation. For this, we have accepted the West German Government's offer to set up a complete television studio and to give training facilities. The West German Government will also supply the necessary technicians until our own people are fully trained. There is a proposal now under consideration to set up four other centres—Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and one other city which will perhaps be Kanpur.

We propose to reorganise and rationalise the pay scales and service conditions of the Central Information Service. It has been decided to upgrade certain senior posts to attract better and more efficient people. Hon members also evinced considerable interest in training facilities. They will be glad to know that by August 1965, we propose to start the work of the National Institute of Mass Communication with 70 trainees—one each from the States and Union territories and the rest from the Central Information Service. This Institute will ultimately find a place in the campus of the proposed Nehru University.

It is unfortunately true that for many reasons—the rigidity of government rules and regulations and the higher pay given by private agencies—the government is not often able to attract or to keep the best talent. Our task is to attempt to bring this talent into play and to help it to enrich our media of communication.

As government servants, our staff get more security than they would in private employment, but at the same time they are also exposed to far greater scrutiny and criticism.

Distinguished and knowledgeable foreign visitors have been amazed at the quality and the amount of work achieved within our extremely limited resources of trained personnel, of equipment, of funds and accommodation.

To the hon. members of this House, I am especially grateful for the in-

terest which they have always taken and the guidance they have always given to the different dpartments of my Ministery. But I should like to take this occasion to make a plea to them. In India, we expect too much too soon from any project. Criticism begins almost before the project is under way If we are to get out of our grooves, and yesterday's debate showed that this is what most hon. members would like us to do, if we are to give our young people the chance to think original thoughts or to evolve new techiques, we must be prepared for them also to make honest mistakes and to show a certain amount of sympathy to them. Too often do we seize upon an error with such alacrity that initiative and talent are frightened out of existence. The progress of this country has been no mean achievement by any standards. This we could attain because we stood determinedly by our declared policy of socialist development at home and non-alignment abroad, in spite of persistent attempts by our opponents, ever since independence, to side-track us from our goals and to involve us with power groups inside or outside the country. While the Government has chartered the course, it is for the people themselves at their posts, officials and non-officials, peasants and workers, all citizens who have supported the Government and who have struggled, in the face of endless difficulties, to advance step by step.

It is true that Government's policies and actions and their projections give direction and create an image, of the country, but I should like to remind hon. members that their utterances and their criticism also influence the thinking of our people and are apt to be quoted against our own country abroad. Let us, therfore, be careful that for the sake of scoring points or gaining some other advantage, we do no tarnish the image of India for our own people or for people abroad. I believe that if we can keep faith in the Indian people, if we can give them faith in themselves, we shall strengthen the country and renew our sense of national pride.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall now put all the cut motions to the vote of the House.

*The cut motions were put and negatived.*

**Mr. Speaker:** The question is:

"That the respective sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the fourth column of the order paper, be granted to the President, *to complete* the sums necessary to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1966, in respect of the heads of demands entered in the second column thereof against Demands Nos. 69 to 71 and 134 relating to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting."

*The motion was adopted*

[*The motions of Demands for Grants which were adopted by the Lok Sabha are reproduced below—Ed.*]

DEMAND NO. 69—MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,83,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1966, in respect of 'Ministry of Information and Broadcasting'."

DEMAND NO. 70—BROADCASTING

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,38,73,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during March, 1966, in respect of 'Broadcasting'."

DEMANDS NO. GV—OTHER REVENUE EXPENDITURE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,12,29,000 be granted to the Pre-

sident to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1966, in respect of Other Revenue Expenditure of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting'."

DEMAND NO. 134—CAPITAL OUTLAY OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,58,42,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1966, in respect of 'Capital Outlay of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting'."

---

**13 hrs.**

MINISTRY OF REHABILITATION

**Mr. Speaker:** The House will now take up discussion and voting on Demand Nos. 84, 85 and 139 relating to the Ministry of Rehabilitation for which 4 hours have been allotted.

Hon. Members desirous of moving their cut motions may send slips to the Table within 15 minutes indicating which of the cut motions they would like to move.

DEMAND NO. 84—MINISTRY OF REHABILITATION

**Mr. Speaker:** Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 32,20,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1966, in respect of Ministry of Rehabilitation'."

DEMAND NO. 85—EXPENDITURE ON DISPLACED PERSONS

**Mr. Speaker:** Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 9,30,86,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1966, in respect of 'Expenditure on Displaced Persons'."

DEMAND NO. 139—CAPITAL OUTLAY OF THE MINISTRY OF REHABILITATION

**Mr. Speaker:** Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 9,19,20,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1966, in respect of 'Capital Outlay of the Ministry of Rehabilitation'."

The above Demands are now before the House.

**Shri Y. N. Singha** (Sundergarh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the problems of the Ministry of Rehabilitation are as old as our independence. For the last seventeen years it has been an important national concern and nobody knows how long these problems would continue, if they are not properly solved. This problem unfortunately is dependent upon our relationship with a neighbouring State. Pakistan, whose behaviour with its minority community determines its aggravation or amelioration.

After unthinkable barbarism and colossal holocaust, it took quite some time for healing up and before things had begun settling down fresh tension appeared in Pakistan shattering the confidence of the minorities in that Government. Hindus, Buddhists and Christians were robbed of their property, women of their dignity and men, women and children killed by organised riots and communal disturbance. In such an atmosphere it is