

Mr. Speaker: No statement is needed now.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Members of Parliament are laughing... (*Interruption*).

give your consent to the Privilege Motion.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: This is wrong. I will read out the proceedings.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Let us hear him.

12.56 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

SEVENTEENTH REPORT

Shri Khadlikar (Khed): Sir, I beg to present the Seventeenth Report of the Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House.

Shri Asoka Mehta: As there have been some rumours and misunderstanding in the matter, and as announced by the Leader of the House yesterday, I wish to clarify the position.

Mr. Speaker: I have asked Shri Banerjee so many times to keep quiet.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: They enjoy an immunity.

12.56 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: PRESS REPORTS ON PLANNING MINISTER'S VISIT TO USA AND CANADA

Mr. Speaker: Statement by Shri Asoka Mehta.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): Sir, I rise on a point of order about this
:1611 P.M.

Mr. Speaker: Let me hear the statement first.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I have got this statement.

Mr. Speaker: Let me hear it first.

The Minister of Planning and Social Welfare (Shri Asoka Mehta): **Mr. Speaker,** Sir, yesterday, some Honourable Members referred to certain press reports to the effect that I was awaiting clearance from Washington to the statement that I propose to make to the House tomorrow on my recent discussions in the United States and Canada. Some Honourable Members had also given notice of a Privilege Motion in regard to a PTI report that before leaving Washington I met the President of the World Bank to get from him an agreement on the statement which I would make in this House. You, **Mr. Speaker,** have already declined to

Shri Asoka Mehta: At the outset, I should like to deny that the statement that I propose to make tomorrow has been agreed upon with the President of the World Bank, Mr. Woods, or that I am waiting to get clearance to the statement from Washington. The statement that I propose to make tomorrow on my visit to the United States and Canada is being finalised. I undertook its preparation only after reporting my discussions in Washington to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. There could be no question of my having obtained the agreement of the World Bank President to it or having sought the clearance of Washington to it.

As the hon. Members are aware, the purpose of my visit was to hold discussions with Mr. Woods, the President of the World Bank, and the President and senior officials of the United States Government. The object of my discussion was to ascertain the nature of support that could be expected for the Fourth Five Year Plan from the countries of the "Aid-India Consortium", of which the World Bank President is the Chairman, and the U.S.A., which is one of the most important countries of the "Aid-India Consortium". Owing to the important nature of these discussions, it was necessary to seek confirmation from them

for that part of the record of our discussions which represented the views and the statements made by the World Bank President and the U.S. authorities. It was necessary to do so in order that there could be no misunderstanding later as to the precise indications given to me by the World Bank President and the U.S. authorities. These will naturally form part of the statement that I propose to make tomorrow to the House. All that I sought to do, before leaving Washington, was to ensure that in my statement to this House, I faithfully report, both in letter and spirit, the nature of indications given to me by the World Bank President and the U.S. authorities.

13 hrs.

Some hon. Members rose—

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Barrackpore): I would like to state that the statement made by the Minister of Planning is based on a PTI report itself and he denies that.

Firstly, I would like to point out to you that after having denied it, he again says that he had to share with the World Bank a part of the record of the discussions which represented the views and the statements made by the World Bank President and the U.S. authorities. Then, he says:

"This will naturally form part of the statement that I propose to make tomorrow to the House."

This was exactly my contention. Sir, he had a long discussion with the World Bank, with President Johnson and everybody else there. After such discussions that took place, our Ministers are expected to understand their mind. The two minds have met and they already know what one wants the other to do. Surely, they would have also exchanged the minutes of discussions.

Now, the paper says that he showed them a portion of the statement—this is a PTI report and that he

agreed on the statement—which Mr. Asoka Mehta is going to make to Parliament. Mr. Parasuram's statement shows that he showed those portions which he is going to make to Parliament. That is exactly my point that no part of the statement which is to be placed before the House must be shown to anybody except after it has been made on the floor of the House. You also said—it may be, tomorrow you may give your opinion—that you will give your ruling after having the full statement which Mr. Mehta is going to make.

Yesterday, there was a news item saying that, after having shown, as he says, those portions to the World Bank because it was a very important statement and he wanted no misunderstanding, he met Mr. Chester Bowls on Tuesday and the talks had centred round on some of the points which Mr. Mehta is going to deal in a statement to be made to Parliament. Don't you think that, after seeing this statement, no such statement should be permitted which has been shown earlier to the World Bank President? We want to know the assessment of our Minister. We do not want that it should be okayed by anybody else. He has had talks with them. He has understood their minds. Now we want an independent assessment to be placed before the House. We know clearly that tomorrow he is not going to give us any actual figures. If it was a question of figures, I could have understood. If it is a question of what his assessment is after he has had discussions with them, that particular statement must be his own and not a part of it to be shown to the World Bank or to anybody else. This is my humble submission.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta Central): There are press reports which have appeared and which continue to be very disturbing from the point of view of parliamentary procedure, propriety and from the more fundamental point of view of

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

the interest of our own country being in jeopardy in certain negotiations.

I can quite understand the anxiety of the Planning Minister about securing the precise formulation from the World Bank or whatever other authorities he consulted regarding what their claims or their offers were. But I cannot understand and I cannot conceivably understand a sort of anxiety which he has reportedly demonstrated according to the press reports by going to the President of the World Bank on the eve of boarding the plane demonstratively so that the press people could get an inkling of it and then giving them some kind of an assurance or at least that was the impression which the press people got that what he was going to tell Parliament was being okayed by the people over there. Here are the accredited press correspondents who are not afraid of divulging their names and they are sending out special despatches mentioning a rather picturesque, somewhat humiliating fact that the Minister for Planning of India, on the eve of boarding the plane, rushes off to somebody else to get an okay from him. If it is a matter as the Planning Minister now tries to suggest of getting a precise formulation of what the World Bank offers or the World Bank demands or requires, that is a matter of internal negotiations and conversations and discussions between Government and Government representatives. That is a matter which has nothing whatever to do with the report to Parliament. There is a fear from what Mr. Asoka Mehta says now that what actually is told by the World Bank representatives is to be formulated very strictly and rigidly so that all that can be put in a report to Parliament. All this is most mystifying and whatever comes out of it is extremely humiliating. I can understand the report presented to Parliament on the basis of a discussion with foreign representatives. But I don't understand how the Minister is explaining away

the reported fact which he cannot deny that he did not have this kind of consultation which has given rise to reporters saying very hopefully that we have tried to get an okay, a clearance, for what is going to be said in Parliament by the Minister from certain external sources.

I feel, therefore, from what the Minister says and he, more or less, accepts what the press had reported, that it is quite clear that a report to Parliament is going to include something which is okayed by a foreign agency and even before the report is presented, in order to make our humiliation even more glaring, in order to add salt to our injury, to our wounds, this whole matter is placarded all over the world and the press of the world are making a story out of this business that a Parliament has been subjected to this kind of humiliating treatment and the humiliating postures which, as the representative of the Government, the Planning Minister did have to assume in America. This is exactly what the House should not tolerate.

श्री भवु लिखये (मुंबई) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, पहले तो वह बात मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि मन्त्री महोदय का यह वाक्य कि—

"You, Mr. Speaker, have already declined to give your consent to the Privilege Motion."

वह बिल्कुल मसत है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैंने दोनों स्टेटमेंट के लिये कहा था . . .

श्री भवु लिखये : आपने घन्ट में कहा था कि उनका बयान देखने के बाद फैसला करूंगा। इसलिये मैं निवेदन करूंगा कि यह विज्ञापक-कार का नोटिस आपके और सदन के विचार-धीन है, उस पर आपको निर्णय करना है।

दूसरी बात यह है कि इन्होंने कहा कि विदेशी सहायता के बारे में वर्ल्ड बैंक के अधिकारी तथा अमरीकी सरकार के अधिकारियों उन्हे उबको बातचीत करवी थी और उनके

साथ जो बातचीत हुई है, उसका सही प्रति-
बिम्ब इनके बयान में धाये, इसलिये उनसे वह
धन्यमति या मुक्ति-यत्न प्राप्त करने की कोशिश
करते थे। उनकी जो बातचीत बर्नर्ड बेक या
अमरीका के अधिकारियों के साथ हुई, उसको
केकर वह संयुक्त निवेदन निकाल देते। सदन
के सामने जो निवेदन किया जाता है या
भाषण दिया जाता है, उसके सम्बन्ध में किसी
काहरी शक्ति से या अधिकारी से इजाजत
मांगना, धन्यमति मांगना, मैं समझता हूँ कि
सदन की जो सार्वभौमिकता है, उस पर
कुठाराघात है। आइन्दा कम से कम धाय
मन्त्रियों से साफ़ कहें कि जो अफसरों से बात-
चीत होयी, उसके बारे में संयुक्त व्यक्ति
या निवेदन दे दें वहाँ पर जो निवेदन या
भाषण देंगे, वह स्वेच्छा से करेंगे, किसी से
पूछ कर नहीं।

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hosh-
angabad):** Sir, permit me to invite
your attention to para 2 of the state-
ment which says:

"...I should like to deny that
the statement that I propose to
make tomorrow has been agreed
with the President of the World
Bank, Mr. Woods, or that I am
waiting to get clearance to the
statement from Washington."

He has denied this. But what is the
PTI report?

".....in regard to a PTI
report that before leaving
Washington I met the President
of the World Bank to get from
him an agreement on the state-
ment which I would make in this
House."

That PTI report has not been con-
tradicted. It is not possible for him
to contradict that. That means it
stands.

Now, Sir, either the Minister
is making a wrong statement—I would
not use a stronger word—or the
P.T.I. in making a false statement
I take it, because the hon. Minister

is an honourable man, that has told
us the truth.

श्री मधु लिमये : धाल इण्डिया रेडियो
की।

श्री हरि विष्णु कामथ : मैं कभी नहीं
सुनता हूँ धाल इण्डिया रेडियो को। मेरी उसे
सुनने की खादत नहीं है।

Therefore, the statement attributed
to the P.T.I. the report which has
already appeared is probably *prima
facie* incorrect or false. Therefore,
the light of the statement made by
the Minister in the House today, the
privilege motion arises against the
PTI, that the PTI has made a false
report with regard to the Minister.
Therefore a formal notice of a privi-
lege motion against the PTI could
be given straightway.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Mr. Speaker,
Sir, my first point is, that this state-
ment which Shri Asoka Mehta has
made that you have already declined
to give your consent is not correct..

Mr. Speaker: I have made it clear.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: The hon.
Minister has made a statement with-
out even reading it.

Shrimati Benu Chakravarty: To-
morrow he is going to say something.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I would like
to read this item from the news
broadcast on the 7th May, 1966 at 1.30
P.M. and 9 P.M. It says:

"The PTI report from
Washington says that the Minis-
ter of Planning Mr. Asoka
Mehta has been given assurances
of support by the World Bank
and the U.S. in India's develop-
ment. Before leaving Washing-
ton for home, Mr. Mehta had a
final meeting with the World
Bank President, Mr. Woods. They
are reported to have agreed on
the statement which Mr. Mehta
will make in Parliament on the

(Shri S. M. Banerjee)

Bank's share of assistance to India."

As Shri Kamath has very ably said, there is this statement of the hon. Minister. I read from the statement; where he said:

"Some hon. Members had also given notice of a privilege motion in regard to a PTI report that before leaving Washington I met the President of the World Bank to get from him an agreement on the statement which I would make in this House".

—Sir, this he has not denied. Then, the third point is this. He said: I am reading from the third para, page 2.

"Owing to the important nature of these discussions it was incumbent on me to share with them that part of the record of our discussions which represented the views and the statements made by the World Bank President and the U.S. authorities."

Even after all that took place in U.S.A. during his visit either with the President of the World Bank or with U.S. officials including the President, it is reported that he met Mr. Chester Bowles and even then the statement was not prepared or laid on the Table of the House and he wants another day. He discussed with the Cabinet—Only day-before-yesterday. And tomorrow he is going to make a statement. I would like to know, Sir, whether with the statement any letters were exchanged. Ordinarily with such statements letters are exchanged; documents are exchanged. Such letters and documents might have been exchanged. This is the case when talks take place between two Governments. This is not a private talk. The Planning Minister represented our country. He was negotiating on behalf of our country with the World Bank and the

US authorities. Now, Sir, I just want to allay the fears in the minds of the people that our country is being sold to the American whims and to the dollars. I would like to know whether other documents connected with this matter have been exchanged between the two Governments. I would request they should lay those documents also on the Table of the House so that we can get a clear picture of the whole thing.

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirappalli): I find that the Privilege Motion is strongly justified, because of the time-lag after his coming here. Several days have elapsed and he did not come forward to make a statement to this House. Further, Sir, in the meanwhile many statements were coming and he is now saying that whatever discussion he had in Washington he had to do it and he had to share his views on the subject and to know their minds. But, Sir, while all these things were happening, he did not take care to say, to tell us, to tell this House, what actually happened behind our back. He was continuously doing this correspondence and he was gathering material. He was exchanging notes and he was hiding this matter and this subject from the people and from this House. Therefore, Sir, he has committed a breach of privilege and he has to be hauled up for that. (Interruptions.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Shri Asoka Mehta: I would like to repudiate the various insinuations that have been made against me and the way I have conducted my work in the United States. Sir, I saw that certain insinuations have been made because it is argued that the newspapermen knew what I was going there. I was discussing with the President of the World Bank till 5-30 when I got into the plane to go to New York to catch the Plane for India. It is obvious. The World Bank President represents the consortium—he

speaking on behalf of a number of countries. Whatever he agrees to with us, he has to communicate to ten countries. He was not speaking on his own behalf. He has to be clear about what he is telling us and he has to be clear about what we are telling him. In respect of any bilateral discussion that takes place—any discussion where there are two parties—whatever final conclusions are reached, it is necessary that we have a common record of understanding. (Interruption) Secondly, Sir, because Mr. Chester Bowles came and saw me the day-before yesterday the Hungarian Ambassador was with me yesterday, the Canadian High Commissioner was with me this morning—is it being suggested that if any Ambassador or High Commissioner comes to me they are trying to find out what I am going to do with the Parliament? It is absolutely unfair; it is impossible for any person to function if these kinds of charges are going to be levelled, if such insinuations are going to be made. Sir, I am here as a Minister because I enjoy the confidence of my Prime Minister and the confidence of my colleagues in the ruling party. So long as I enjoy the confidence of my leader and the confidence of my colleagues in the Congress party I would not subject myself to this kind of insinuation.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the desire of the Members who gave the notice of Privilege that I should give my judgment of my decision now? (Interruption).

श्री मधु लिषये : कल दीजिये ।

Mr. Speaker: What else have they been doing uptill now? They were pressing me. If the ruling was not required what was the sense in the discussion?

An hon. Member: The Minister should enjoy the confidence of the House—not merely the confidence of his colleagues only.

Mr. Speaker: If I am required to give that ruling at this moment I am ready with it.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: You said now you wanted time.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: If you are ready with your ruling, your wisdom should be made available to us, either now or at a subsequent time. We should get your decision.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Communications (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): You may give your ruling whatever it is.

Shri Ranga (Chittoor): Why not get a clear statement from him tomorrow and then give your ruling?

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: You may give your ruling tomorrow because another fresh notice is coming.

Mr. Speaker: No. That would be a different thing altogether.

Shri Nambiar: We will leave it to you.

Mr. Speaker: Why have it tomorrow? Now, today, this discussion has taken place and twenty minutes have been taken uptill now. Tomorrow again there will be discussion. We ought to have some sense of proportion about the time also.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Notice of the privilege motion has already been given and it is awaiting your decision.

Mr. Speaker: If it is the desire that I should now make up my mind....

श्री मधु लिषये : उनका भी—कामत साहब—का प्रिविलेज मोशन है पी० टी० आई० के खिलाफ। कल ही दीजिये ।

Mr. Speaker: I had said at that time that I will give my ruling after the statement has been made. Therefore I was reluctant. If the Members on that side want that, I can give that, on the basis of the material that has come on the record up till now.

श्री जयु लिखये : मैं चाहता हूँ कि कल ही दिया जाय ।

Mr. Speaker: I am required to give my ruling on this point, so far as the material that has come on the record is concerned. The question raised was that the PTI had made a report that the clearance of whatever statement was going to be made before Parliament had been sought from the President or from the World Bank Chairman, and that a breach of privilege had been committed thereby because the statement ought to have been made in Parliament straightway and no clearance should have been sought for, and that it was humiliating for any Minister of the Government to get a clearance from any outside agency....

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Which he has not denied.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister has explained that because the talks had been going on, therefore, he had to get this much just approved in regard to whatever impressions he had gathered about the talks that they had and about what had been said by the other side, whether he had got the correct impressions in his mind about what had been conveyed by the World Bank President or by the President of the USA. That is ordinary courtesy. If two persons of whatever position talk to each other, then too they exchange notes, and the one says to the other 'I would like to know whether I have understood you rightly; I carry this impression.'

श्री जयु लिखये : अध्यक्ष महोदय, ज्वाइंट कम्युनिके हो सकता था ।

Mr. Speaker: When two statesmen have a conversation or have some discussion, and they have to arrive at a decision, then it is customary to find out from the other party before releasing what impression one has

carried, saying This is what I am carrying in my brain or in my mind about the talks that we two have had. Have you any objection to it? Or have you to say anything about it? Or is this the correct impression that I have gathered? Or is there anything that you want to object to? That is always done.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the Planning Minister also wanted just to make sure that whatever impressions he had gathered about the talks that he had with two dignitaries must be confirmed and just got approved of by them so that those impressions were the correct ones. Therefore, no breach of privilege arises on this matter.

श्री जयु लिखये : मैंने जो नुक्ता रखा था उसका तो घापने जबाब नहीं दिया घाप की बात मैं मानता हूँ कि जब किसी विदेशी प्रतिनिधि के साथ बात होती है तो यह करना चाहिए लेकिन एक्सचेंज घाफ लेटर के जरिये हो सकता है, ज्वाइंट कम्युनिके के जरिये हो सकता है यह तो घापने ऐसे ही निर्णय दे दिया, प्रौर जो बात मैंने रखी थी उस पर घापने फैसला ही नहीं दिया ।

13.22 hrs.

RE: STATEMENT UNDER DIRECTION 115

Mr. Speaker: Then, there is a statement to be made by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. The hon. Member is absent. So, we shall take up the next item.

13.22 hrs.

RE: QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair (Quilon): I had written to you, bringing to your notice, another case of contempt of this Lok Sabha. I would like to know what decision you have taken on that matter.