

RAJYA SABHA

(1959)

Point of privilege

Unfair and mendacious reporting of proceedings of the House and casting reflections on a member.

Facts of the case and reference to the Committee of Privileges.

On the 8th September, 1958, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, a member, gave notice of a question involving a breach of privilege of the House arising out of certain observations contained in a feature article entitled 'In Parliament' appearing in the weekly journal Thought dated the 6th September, 1958, published from New Delhi. The relevant passage in the article was as follows:

"When a Congress member Mr. H. P. Saksena (U.P.) did a bit of skinpeeling that exposed the spots on the Communist friends of the Nagas, Mr. Gupta did the obvious: he flew into a rage. 'This was' he shrieked (Mr. voice is too shrill to permit a, thunder), 'fatuuous, fantastic, untrue'."

2. The Chairman (Dr. S. Radhakrishnan) referred the matter to the Committee of Privileges for examination, investigation and report.

Findings and recommendations of the Committee

3. The Committee of Privileges, after examining Shri Bhupesh Gupta, and Shri Ram Singh, the Editor of Thought, in their Third Report, presented to the House on 6th March, 1959 reported, inter alia, as follows:-

(i) "In the course of his statement, Shri Ram Singh said that at the time the offending article was written in the issue of 'Thought', he or his columnist had not taken into consideration the latter portion of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha of the 27th August, 1958, where in Shri H. P. Saksena had stated that he did not suggest that Shri Bhupesh Gupta or the Communists were misleading the Nagas. Shri Ram Singh further said that if this had been taken into consideration, the report of the columnist and his conclusions might have been different. He expressed regret for this inadvertent inaccuracy, He also expressed regret for his references to Shri Bhupesh Gupta which were of a personal character."

(ii) "The Committee is of the opinion that, in view of the explanation offered and the regrets expressed before the Committee by Shri Ram Singh, the Editor of 'Thought' no further time should be occupied by the House in consideration of this matter."

(iii) "The Committee, therefore, recommends that no further action be taken by the House in the matter."

Action taken by the House

4. On 9th March 1959, the House adopted the following motion moved by Shri S. V. krishnamoorthy (Chairman of the Committee of Privileges):

"That the Third Report of 'the Committee of Privileges, laid on the table of the House on 6th March, 1959, be taken into consideration, and having considered the same the House agrees with the recommendation contained in the Report."