

RAJYA SABHA

(1973)

Point of privilege

Alleged misreporting of the proceedings of the House by a newspaper

Facts of the case and action taken by the House

On the 1st August, 1973, Shri S. S. Mariswamy, a member sought to raise¹ a question of privilege against the Editor. Alai Osai, a Tamil daily, for allegedly misreporting the proceedings of the House. Shri Mariswamy stated that the said newspaper in its issue dated the 26th July, 1973, under the heading 'Charges levelled against Tamil Nadu Government official in Parliament', had wrongly published a news item to the effect that Shri A. G. Kulkarni, another member, while Putting a supplementary to a Starred Question in the House on the 24th July, 1973, had charged that in the matter of import of stainless steel by a Company in Tamil Nadu, a Deputy Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Government had helped the firm. According to Shri Mariswamy. what Shri Kulkarni had actually stated in the House was that the Deputy Secretary concerned had written to the Government of India in the matter. Therefore, the newspaper by publishing a wrong report of the proceedings of the House had wilfully and intentionally committed a breach of privilege and contempt of the House.

2. The Deputy Chairman (Shri 'G. Murahari), who was in the Chair, observed that the Editor of the concerned newspaper had been asked to state what he had to say in the matter and that further action would be taken on hearing from him.

3. On the 23rd August, 1973, the Chairman (Shri G. S. Pathak) informed² the House inter alia as follows:-

"The Editor of Alai Osai who was asked to let us know what he had to say in the matter, had first stated that the news mentioned above was based on the P.T.I. reports. By a subsequent letter, the Editor stated that the news item concerned was published on the basis of the publication made in The Hindu and The Hindu published the same on the basis of the P.T.I. report. He also expressed regret for the publication of the version in his newspaper based on the P.T.I. report.

On the basis of the information furnished by the Editor, Alai Osai, the matter was taken up with the Editor-in-Chief, PTI. The latter intimated that they had carried an erroneous report on the subject due to misreporting by its reporter and expressed regret for the same. P.T.I. also issued a correction to their earlier report on the subject.

The correct version of the report as now issued by the P.T.I. has since been published in Alai Osai of August 13, 1973, along with an expression of regret for publishing an incorrect version of the report earlier.

In the circumstances, I am treating the matter as closed.,"

4. The matter was accordingly closed.

1. R.S. Deb., dt.1.8.1973
2. Ibid, dt. 23.8.1973