

## RAJYA SABHA

(1978)

### **Point of privilege**

*Alleged misreporting of proceedings of the House by a newspaper*

### **Facts of the case and ruling by the Chair**

On the 10th May, 1978, the Chairman (Shri B. D. Jatti) informed<sup>1</sup> the House as follows:-

"I have to inform-the House that on the 3rd May, 1978, Shri Surendra Mohan, a Member of this House, gave a notice of breach of privilege against the Editor of National Herald for publishing in the issue of the paper dated the 28th April, 1978 a misleading report of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha relating to the speech of the Minister of Industry made by him while replying to the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Industry on 27th April, 1978. Shri Surendra Mohan in his notice had particularly objected to the misreporting of the Minister's observations on 'Coca-cola', 'I.B.M.' and Shri K. K. Birla' under the caption 'Elders critical of industrial policy.' The report had stated that according to the Minister of Industry, the Coca-cola and the I.B.M. were closed because the Chairman of the Coca-cola had contested the Lok Sabha elections in 1977 and the I.B.M. was located in the building of National Herald; and that his Ministry would give consideration to Shri K. K. Birla's support to Smt. Indira Gandhi while dealing with the Birla House from time to time. On verification from the record of relevant proceed of the House, it was found that the Minister of Industry had not given any such reasons about the closure of the Coca-cola and I.B.M. as attributed to him in the newspaper report, nor did he hold out any such threat while speaking on the Birlas.

The matter was referred, under my direction, to the Editor of the National Herald. New Delhi inquiring from him if he had anything to say in this regard. The Editor in his letter, dated 6th May, 1978, has submitted that the report of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha of April 27, 1978, published in the National Herald of April 28, 1978, did give a misleading impression and had explained the circumstances in which the impugned news item had been published in the paper. He has further stated that the distortion in the reporting of the Industry Minister's speech was not deliberate and he deeply regretted the inconvenience and embarrassment caused by wrong impression created by the report.

The Editor has since published a correction in the National Herald of May 9, 1978 to the effect that Shri Fernandes did not give the reasons about Coca-cola and I.B.M, and also did not make the threat against Birlas as reported in the paper, and has regretted the mistake.

In view of the expression of regret and correction of the proceedings of the House by the Editor, National Herald, if the House agrees, the matter may be treated as closed. However, I do hope that the press would exercise great care in reporting accurately the proceedings of the House so that such misreporting and distortion do not occur in future."

2. The matter was, thereafter, closed.

1. R.S. Deb., dt. 10-5-1978, cc. 174-75.