

ACT NO. I OF 1910.

PASSED BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA IN COUNCIL.

(Received the assent of the Governor General on the 9th February 1910.)

An Act to provide for the better control of the Press.

WHEREAS it is necessary to provide for the better control of the Press; It is hereby enacted as follows :—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Indian Press Act, 1910. Short title and extent.

(2) It extends to the whole of British India, inclusive of British Baluchistan, the Santhal Parganas and the Pargana of Spiti.

2. In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,— Definitions.

(a) "book" includes every volume, part or division of a volume, and pamphlet, in any language, and every sheet of music, map, chart or plan separately printed or lithographed :

(b) "document" includes also any painting, drawing or photograph or other visible representation :

(c) "High Court" means the highest Civil Court of Appeal for any local area except in the case of the provinces of Ajmer-Merwara and Coorg where it means the High Court of Judicature for the North-Western Provinces and the High Court of Judicature at Madras respectively :

(d) "Magistrate" means a District Magistrate or Chief Presidency Magistrate :

(e) "newspaper" means any periodical work containing public news or comments on public news : and

(f) "printing-press

(f) "printing-press" includes all engines, machinery, types, lithographic stones, implements, utensils and other plant or materials used for the purpose of printing.

Deposit of security by keepers of printing-presses.

3. (1) Every person keeping a printing-press who is required to make a declaration under section 4 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, shall, at the time of making the same, deposit with the Magistrate before whom the declaration is made security to such an amount, not being less than five hundred or more than two thousand rupees, as the Magistrate may in each case think fit to require, in money or the equivalent thereof in securities of the Government of India :

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Provided that the Magistrate may, if he thinks fit, for special reasons to be recorded by him, dispense with the deposit of any security or may from time to time cancel or vary any order under this sub-section.

(2) Whenever it appears to the Local Government that any printing-press kept in any place in the territories under its administration, in respect of which a declaration was made prior to the commencement of this Act under section 4 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, is used for any of the purposes described in section 4, sub-section (1), the Local Government may, by notice in writing, require the keeper of such press to deposit with the Magistrate within whose jurisdiction the press is situated security to such an amount, not being less than five hundred or more than five thousand rupees, as the Local Government may think fit to require, in money or the equivalent thereof in securities of the Government of India.

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Power to declare security forfeited in certain cases.

4. (1) Whenever it appears to the Local Government that any printing-press in respect of which any security has been deposited as required by section 3 is used for the purpose of printing or publishing any newspaper, book or other document containing any words, signs or visible representations which are likely or may have a tendency, directly or indirectly, whether

whether by inference, suggestion, allusion, metaphor, implication or otherwise—

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- (a) to incite to murder or to any offence under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908, or to any act of violence, or
- (b) to seduce any officer, soldier or sailor in the Army or Navy of His Majesty from his allegiance or his duty, or
- (c) to bring into hatred or contempt His Majesty or the Government established by law in British India or the administration of justice in British India or any Native Prince or Chief under the suzerainty of His Majesty, or any class or section of His Majesty's subjects in British India, or to excite disaffection towards His Majesty or the said Government or any such Prince or Chief, or
- (d) to put any person in fear or to cause annoyance to him and thereby induce him to deliver to any person any property or valuable security, or to do any act which he is not legally bound to do, or to omit to do any act which he is legally entitled to do, or
- (e) to encourage or incite any person to interfere with the administration of the law or with the maintenance of law and order, or
- (f) to convey any threat of injury to a public servant, or to any person in whom that public servant is believed to be interested, with a view to inducing that public servant to do any act or to forbear or delay to do any act connected with the exercise of his public functions,

the Local Government may, by notice in writing to the keeper of such printing-press, stating or describing the words, signs or visible representations which in its opinion are of the nature described above, declare the security deposited in respect of such press
and

and all copies of such newspaper, book or other document wherever found to be forfeited to His Majesty.

Explanation I.—In clause (c) the expression “disaffection” includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity.

Explanation II.—Comments expressing disapproval of the measures of the Government or of any such Native Prince or Chief as aforesaid with a view to obtain their alteration by lawful means, or of the administrative or other action of the Government or of any such Native Prince or Chief or of the administration of justice in British India without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection do not come within the scope of clause (c).

(2) After the expiry of ten days from the date of the issue of a notice under sub-section (1), the declaration made in respect of such press under section 4 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, shall be deemed to be annulled.

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1867.

Deposit of
further
security.

5. Where the security given in respect of any press has been declared forfeited under section 4, every person making a fresh declaration in respect of such press under section 4 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, shall deposit with the Magistrate before whom such declaration is made security to such amount, not being less than one thousand or more than ten thousand rupees, as the Magistrate may think fit to require, in money or the equivalent thereof in securities of the Government of India.

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Power to
declare
further secu-
rity, print-
ing-press and
publications
forfeited.

6. If after such further security has been deposited the printing-press is again used for the purpose of printing or publishing any newspaper, book or other document containing any words, signs or visible representations which in the opinion of the Local Government are of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1), the Local Government may, by notice in writing to the keeper of such printing-press, stating or describing such words, signs or visible representations, declare—

(a) the further security so deposited,

(b) the printing-press used for the purpose of printing or publishing such newspaper, book

book or other document or found in or upon the premises where such newspaper, book or other document is, or at the time of printing the matter complained of was, printed, and

(c) all copies of such newspaper, book or other document wherever found,

to be forfeited to His Majesty.

7. (1) Where any printing-press is or any copies of any newspaper, book or other document are declared forfeited to His Majesty under this Act, the Local Government may direct any Magistrate to issue a warrant empowering any police-officer, not below the rank of a Sub-Inspector, to seize and detain any property ordered to be forfeited and to enter upon and search for such property in any premises—

Issue of
search-
warrant.

(i) where any such property may be or may be reasonably suspected to be, or

(ii) where any copy of such newspaper, book or other document is kept for sale, distribution, publication or public exhibition or reasonably suspected to be so kept.

(2) Every warrant issued under this section shall, so far as relates to a search, be executed in manner provided for the execution of search-warrants under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

V of 1898.

8. (1) Every publisher of a newspaper who is required to make a declaration under section 5 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, shall, at the time of making the same, deposit with the Magistrate before whom the declaration is made security to such an amount, not being less than five hundred or more than two thousand rupees, as the Magistrate may in each case think fit to require, in money or the equivalent thereof in securities of the Government of India :

Deposit of
security by
publisher of
newspaper.

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1867.

Provided that if the person registered under the said Act as printer of the newspaper is also registered as the keeper of the press where the newspaper is printed, the publisher shall not be required to deposit

deposit security so long as such registration is in force :

Provided further that the Magistrate may, if he thinks fit, for special reasons to be recorded by him, dispense with the deposit of any security or may from time to time cancel or vary any order under this sub-section.

(2) Whenever it appears to the Local Government that a newspaper published within its territories, in respect of which a declaration was made by the publisher thereof prior to the commencement of this Act, under section 5 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, contains any words, signs or visible representations of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1), the Local Government may, by notice in writing, require the publisher to deposit with the Magistrate, within whose jurisdiction the newspaper is published security to such an amount, not being less than five hundred or more than five thousand rupees, as the Local Government may think fit to require, in money or the equivalent thereof in securities of the Government of India.

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Power to
declare
security
forfeited in
certain cases.

9. (1) If any newspaper in respect of which any security has been deposited as required by section 8 contains any words, signs or visible representations which in the opinion of the Local Government are of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1), the Local Government may, by notice in writing to the publisher of such newspaper, stating or describing such words, signs or visible representations, declare such security and all copies of such newspaper, wherever found, to be forfeited to His Majesty.

(2) After the expiry of ten days from the date of the issue of a notice under sub-section (1), the declaration made by the publisher of such newspaper under section 5 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, shall be deemed to be annulled.

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1867.

Deposit of
further
security.

10. Where the security given in respect of any newspaper is declared forfeited, any person making a fresh declaration under section 5 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, as publisher of such newspaper,

newspaper, or any other newspaper which is the same in substance as the said newspaper, shall deposit with the Magistrate before whom the declaration is made security to such amount, not being less than one thousand or more than ten thousand rupees, as the Magistrate may think fit to require, in money or the equivalent thereof in securities of the Government of India.

11. If after such further security has been deposited the newspaper again contains any words, signs or visible representations which in the opinion of the Local Government are of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1), the Local Government may, by notice in writing to the publisher of such newspaper, stating or describing such words, signs or visible representations, declare—

Power to declare further security and newspapers forfeited.

(a) the further security so deposited, and

(b) all copies of such newspaper wherever found,

to be forfeited to His Majesty.

12. (1) Where any newspaper, book or other document wherever printed appears to the Local Government to contain any words, signs or visible representations of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1), the Local Government may, by notification in the local official Gazette, stating the grounds of its opinion, declare such newspaper, book or other document to be forfeited to His Majesty, and thereupon any police-officer may seize the same wherever found, and any Magistrate may by warrant authorise any police-officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector to enter upon and search for the same in any premises where the newspaper, book or other document may be or may be reasonably suspected to be.

Power to declare certain publications forfeited and to issue search-warrants for same.

(2) Every warrant issued under this section shall, so far as relates to a search, be executed in manner provided for the execution of search-warrants under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

v of 1898.

13. The Chief Customs-officer or other officer authorized by the Local Government in this behalf may detain any package brought, whether by land or sea, into British India which he suspects to contain

Power to detain packages containing

any

certain publications when imported into British India.

any newspapers, books or other documents of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1), and shall forthwith forward copies of any newspapers, books or other documents found therein to such officer as the Local Government may appoint in this behalf to be disposed of in such manner as the Local Government may direct.

Prohibition of transmission by post of certain newspapers.

14. No newspaper printed and published in British India shall be transmitted by post unless the printer and publisher have made a declaration under section 5 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, and the publisher has deposited security when so required under this Act.

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Power to detain articles being transmitted by post.

15. Any officer in charge of a post-office or authorised by the Post-Master General in this behalf may detain any article other than a letter or parcel in course of transmission by post, which he suspects to contain—

- (a) any newspaper, book or other document containing words, signs or visible representations of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1), or
- (b) any newspaper in respect of which the declaration required by section 5 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, has not been made, or the security required by this Act has not been deposited by the publisher thereof,

and shall deliver all such articles to such officer as the Local Government may appoint in this behalf to be disposed of in such manner as the Local Government may direct.

Copies of newspapers printed in British India to be delivered gratis to Government

16. (1) The printer of every newspaper in British India shall deliver at such place and to such officer as the Local Government may, by notification in the local official Gazette, direct, and free of expense to the Government, two copies of each issue of such newspaper as soon as it is published.

(2) If any printer of any such newspaper neglects to deliver copies of the same in compliance with sub-section (1), he shall, on the complaint of the officer

to

to whom the copies should have been delivered or of any person authorised by that officer in this behalf, be punishable on conviction by a Magistrate having jurisdiction in the place where the newspaper was printed with fine which may extend to fifty rupees for every default.

17. Any person having an interest in any property in respect of which an order of forfeiture has been made under section 4, 6, 9, 11 or 12 may, within two months from the date of such order, apply to the High Court to set aside such order on the ground that the newspaper, book or other document in respect of which the order was made did not contain any words, signs or visible representations of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1).

Application to High Court to set aside order of forfeiture.

18. Every such application shall be heard and determined by a Special Bench of the High Court composed of three Judges, or, where the High Court consists of less than three Judges, of all the Judges.

Hearing by Special Bench.

19. (1) If it appears to the Special Bench that the words, signs or visible representations contained in the newspaper, book or other document in respect of which the order in question was made were not of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1), the Special Bench shall set aside the order of forfeiture.

Order of Special Bench setting aside forfeiture.

(2) Where there is a difference of opinion among the Judges forming the Special Bench, the decision shall be in accordance with the opinion of the majority (if any) of those Judges.

(3) Where there is no such majority which concurs in setting aside the order in question, such order shall stand.

20. On the hearing of any such application with reference to any newspaper, any copy of such newspaper published after the commencement of this Act may be given in evidence in aid of the proof of the nature or tendency of the words, signs or visible representations contained in such newspaper which are alleged to be of the nature described in section 4, sub-section (1).

Evidence to prove nature or tendency of newspapers.

21. Every

Procedure
in High
Court.

21. Every High Court shall, as soon as conveniently may be, frame rules to regulate the procedure in the case of such applications, the amount of the costs thereof and the execution of orders passed thereon, and until such rules are framed the practice of such Court in proceedings other than suits and appeals shall apply, so far as may be practicable, to such applications.

Jurisdiction
barred.

22. Every declaration of forfeiture purporting to be made under this Act shall, as against all persons, be conclusive evidence that the forfeiture therein referred to has taken place, and no proceeding purporting to be taken under this Act shall be called in question by any Court; except the High Court on such application as aforesaid, and no civil or criminal proceeding, except as provided by this Act, shall be instituted against any person for anything done or in good faith intended to be done under this Act.

Penalty for
keeping
press or
publishing
newspaper
without
making
deposit.

23. (1) Whoever keeps in his possession a press for the printing of books or papers without making a deposit under section 3 or section 5, when required so to do, shall on conviction by a Magistrate be liable to the penalty to which he would be liable if he had failed to make the declaration prescribed by section 4 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.

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(2) Whoever publishes any newspaper without making a deposit under section 8 or section 10, when required so to do, or publishes such newspaper knowing that such security has not been deposited, shall, on conviction by a Magistrate, be liable to the penalty to which he would be liable if he had failed to make the declaration prescribed by section 5 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.

Return of
deposited
security in
certain
cases.

24. Where any person has deposited any security under this Act and ceases to keep the press in respect of which such security was deposited, or, being a publisher, makes a declaration under section 8 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, he may apply to the Magistrate within whose jurisdiction such press is situate for the return of the said security; and thereupon such security shall, upon proof to the satisfaction of the Magistrate and subject to the provisions

provisions hereinbefore contained, be returned to such person.

25. Every notice under this Act shall be sent to a Magistrate, who shall cause it to be served in the manner provided for the service of summonses under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

Service of notices.

v of 1898.

26. Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to prevent any person from being prosecuted under any other law for any act or omission which constitutes an offence against this Act.

Operation of other laws not barred.