

[Shri K.C. Pant]

So far as Shri Banerjee's performance is concerned, it was a fine impromptu performance. I was waiting for him to shed some light on the details of the Bill.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : I supported it.

SHRI K. C. PANT : That is why I am thanking you ; I was coming to that. I thank you very much for the support you gave to the Bill.

Shri Haokip referred to some of the reasons that have held up the progress of the tribal areas, in particular to the fact that the Union Territories Act, 1963, did not give enough power to the State, to the tribal people, to the Hill Areas Committee etc., for effecting sufficient progress. This problem has been dealt with, and the Northeastern Region Re-organisation Bill which I have introduced will bring the State of Manipur into being, if the House approves of it, and this takes care of the point raised by him, which was also referred to by Shri Verma.

There is only one point which I would like very briefly to refer to. Shri P K. Deo referred to *Jhuming*. I do not quite understand that because that has been provided for in the Bill already. So, I do not really know why he referred to that.

In the end, I would like to refer briefly to the speech of Shri Kevichusa who talked of Naga integration. I would only plead with him and other friends who talk of the integration of the Naga area, that this is a moment of joy and fulfilment for the people of Manipur, so let us not do or say anything in this House which detracts from the sense of satisfaction, from the sense of joy and happiness which they are bound to feel when the new State comes into being. And it is in this spirit that I would like to plead with him and others, who have brought in this idea of taking away a part of Manipur and attaching it to Nagaland, at this juncture, when Manipur has become a State, to understand and realise the feelings of the

people of Manipur and not to raise this issue at all which will only create difficulties.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the establishment of District Councils in the Hill Areas in the Union territory of Manipur, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It was announced here that at 12.45 some statements were to be made by Ministers. I have received the following intimation from the Deputy Chief Whip of the ruling party that due to certain unavoidable reasons, Shri Fakruddin Ali Ahmed, Minister of Agriculture, would not be making the statement on sugar today as earlier intimated. He would make the statement only on Monday the 13th December, 1971.

Shri Sethi.

12.42 hrs.

STATEMENT *Re:* AVAILABILITY OF KEROSENE OIL

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI P. C. SETHI) : With the substantial improvement in the availability position of kerosene oil, State Governments were intimated in May 1970 that Statewise allocations have been given up and the oil companies have instructed to meet the requirements of this product in full, in accordance with the actual materialisation of demand which is subject to sharp seasonal fluctuations. It has been possible to maintain this position all along except for local shortages, arising from factors beyond our control such as breaches of rail tracks owing to floods etc.

Even though the heavy influx of refugees from Bangla Desh generated a heavy demand for kerosene oil as also for many other commodities, we were not only able to satisfactorily meet this demand but also to progressively build up the inventories. The Hon'ble Members will appre-

ciate that it will not be in the public interest to presently disclose the details of those inventories, but what I can assure the House is a wholly satisfactory inventory position held by us.

Soon after Pakistan launched the all out offensive against us late in the evening of Friday, 3rd December, 1971, the State Government were reassured that we are holding substantial inventories of kerosene-oil and the public need have no fear on this account. The possibilities of local shortages arising now and then could not, however, be ruled out owing to the need for first meeting the other higher priority requirements. We, therefore, stressed the need for utmost local vigilance, leaving the decision to the State Governments of either continuing intensive supervision and control over its distribution according to stock position in different areas from time to time or alternatively of introducing rationing, as may be feasible. We also stressed the need for meeting the requirements of the rural areas through fair price shops etc., and of promptly punishing under the Defence of India Rules those who hoard stocks or overcharge or misuse kerosene.

Since then several complaints have been received of local shortages of kerosene oil. These complaints can only be due to a general tendency to store essential commodities, including kerosene oil. To avoid any hardship to genuine consumers, we have now recommended to the State Governments the immediate introduction of rationing of kerosene oil to cover the maximum possible area. Back-up quantities for this purpose are locally available and will be regularly maintained. The Delhi Administration has already introduced rationing. Additionally, the IOC has specifically earmarked 5 tank lorries for the retail sale of this product directly to the consumers in the various localities. IOC has instructions to render similar assistance in the other regions also wherever possible. For the rural area we have urged once again the adoption of measures such as distribution through fair price shops etc. Finally we have repeated our instructions for the sternest possible action being taken under Defence of India Rules, including resort to detention under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act and

prosecution, where feasible, of those indulging in antisocial activities such as hoarding, overcharging or misusing kerosene oil.

Some Hon. Members rose:

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Under the rules no questions are allowed. The rule says :

“A statement may be made by a minister on a matter of public importance with the consent of the Speaker but no question shall be asked at the time the statement is made.”

You have put me here to abide by the rules, not violate them. If you want a discussion, you may give separate notice.

As earlier announced, the Defence Minister will make a statement at 1.15.

We will now take up clause-by-clause consideration. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : What is this? Kerosene is not a defence matter. Only MPs, Speaker, Deputy-Speaker, etc. may be getting it. People are standing in the queue for six hours and more and they are not able to get kerosene.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I would request you to cooperate. You can give notice. Don't ask me to violate the rules.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : There have been many instances where the Speaker has allowed one question to be put by each member after such important statement.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You can seek another opportunity.

12.47 hrs.

MANIPUR (HILL AREAS) DISTRICT
COUNCILS BILL—Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : We will now take up clause-by-clause consideration. There are no amendments to clause 2 and 3.