

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

THIRTEENTH REPORT

Sardar Hakam Singh (Bhatinda): I beg to present the Thirteenth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

EVICCTIONS OF TENANTS IN DELHI

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): Under rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

"The large-scale evictions of Delhi tenants and hunger strike by the President of their Federation."

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri K. C. Reddy): Mr. Speaker, Sir, evictions of tenants in Delhi are regulated by the Delhi and Ajmer Rent Control Act of 1952, which has about 14 grounds on which a house-owner can move the court for the eviction of his tenant. It will be recollected that Parliament passed in December, 1956, the Delhi Tenants (Temporary Protection) Act which reduced the number of grounds to four only in case of tenants paying a rent of less than Rs. 100 per month. A tenant who is under order of eviction by a court, enjoys a further protection under the Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act of 1956. If a tenant is living in a declared slum-area, no person who has obtained any decree or order of eviction against him is entitled to execute such a decree or order, except with the previous permission in writing of the competent authority. It will thus be seen that the tenants today

enjoy a fair measure of protection against eviction. By far the large majority of the poorer tenants live in slum-areas in Delhi. Before a house-owner can evict them, he has to appear before the competent authority, who after giving an opportunity to the tenant of being heard and after making such summary enquiry into the circumstances of the case as he thinks fit, grants or refuses to grant the eviction ordered by the Court. According to information now available, there have not been any large-scale evictions since the passing of the two Acts in 1956. On the other hand, it appears that the number of evictions is on the decline.

However, since numerous complaints were received from the tenants as well as house-owners about the provisions and working of the 1952 Act and the Temporary Protection Act of 1956, I and officials of my Ministry have been meeting their representatives from time to time. The representatives of the Delhi Pradesh Kirayadar Federation also met me and it was in early January, 1958, that they demanded that Government should issue an Ordinance stopping all evictions, except on grounds of non-payment of rent, and should set up a committee consisting of the representatives of the tenants, landlords and Government officials to let out vacant premises in future. It was stated that if this was not done by 25th January, the President of the Federation would proceed on a hunger strike on 27th January. Officials of my Ministry, who saw the representatives of the Delhi Pradesh Kirayadar Federation on 14th January, pointed out to them that the viewpoint of the Federation would have to be considered by Government along with the views expressed by other interests and associations. They were also informed of the programme relating to the introduction of a Bill in Parliament during the Budget Session and were told that Government were doing their best to bring in comprehensive legislation on the