

23 APR 2001

Parliament-Motion

COMMOTION AFTER GOVT BACKBENCHER'S MOTION FAILS TO WIN SUPPORT

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- The rejection of a government backbencher's motion to adjourn proceedings in the Dewan Rakyat to discuss use of Federal Government allocations for educational institutions in Terengganu resulted in commotion in the House today.

The motion relating to the Terengganu PAS Government ironically had the full support of the Opposition but not that of government members.

The Opposition was intent on debating the motion tabled by Bung Moktar Radin (BN-Kinabatangan) even before Deputy Speaker Datuk Lim Si Cheng finished his sentence rejecting the motion.

Bung Moktar when tabling the motion said it should be urgently debated as it involved Federal allocations totalling RM40 million to several educational institutions in Terengganu --- Terengganu Advance Training Institute (TATI), Kolej Ugama Sultan Zainal Abidin (KUSZA) and 11 secondary religious schools.

However it was not known how the money was being used, he said.

According to Bung Moktar, the institutions concerned had been directed to channel the money to the Terengganu Government and the money would then be disbursed when the need arose.

"It is feared that the money will be misappropriated to finance the political programmes of the Terengganu PAS Government top leadership which will be involved in party elections," he said.

Bung Moktar said the Terengganu Government's move to seize the rights of the Terengganu people was very serious, cruel and extreme as this could affect lives of many people particularly the affected students.

"It is also an effort to sabotage and stifle the smooth education process in Terengganu," he said.

However Lim saying the motion was not urgent rejected it, prompting all Opposition members to stand up and request that it be debated but no support was forthcoming from government members including Bung Moktar himself.

Seeing that Bung Moktar himself was not opposing the Deputy Speaker's decision, Chong Eng (DAP-Bukit Mertajam) said, "Why are you not standing up."

Several other Opposition members also joined in and screamed at Bung Moktar to stand up and support the Opposition call for a debate of the motion. They included Fong Po Kuan (DAP-Batu Gajah), Mohd Apandi Mohamed (PAS-Jeli), Husam Musa (PAS-Kubang Kerian) and Mustafa @ Hassan Ali (PAS-Dungun).

Lim in trying to bring calm to the situation said, "Honourable Members, it is enough. I have made a decision. I understand what is it to be discussed but it is not urgent. The honourable member can raise the matter during the debate on the Eighth Malaysia Plan later."

The Deputy Speaker then asked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to table the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

Dr Mahathir who rose to begin his speech sat down again when Kerk Kim Hock (DAP-Kota Melaka) and Dr Syed Azman Syed Ahmad Nawawi (PAS-Kuala Terengganu) intervened.

Dr Syed Azman citing Standing Order 37(1) questioned the aim of the Prime Minister in tabling the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

"Is the tabling by the Prime Minister relevant to the current economic situation. Moreover the Finance Minister is also on leave," he said.

Dr Mahathir who was again asked by Lim to deliver his speech, said, "It is difficult... if people who do not know anything about this... to speak."

Earlier during Question Time, the House echoed with desk thumping by Opposition members when Kerk came in after having been suspended for three days.

The Opposition's show of support for Kerk caused the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Noh Omar to pause while responding to a question from Dr Syed Azman Syed Ahmad Nawawi (PAS-Kuala Terengganu) on Tabung Haji investment.

Fifteen minutes later there was again thumping of the desk, this time by government backbenchers when Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin walked in.

This time Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia who was replying to Datuk Moahamd Aziz (BN-Sri Gading) about traffic lights in KL had to pause for the din to stop.

-- BERNAMA

NHA MS AAM