

WITHDRAWAL OF NAGA PEOPLE FROM THE
MEETING ADDRESSED BY THE PRIME
MINISTER

*646. SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Naga people withdrew from the meeting addressed by the Prime Minister at Kohima on March 30, 1953;

(b) if so what were the reasons for their withdrawal; and

(c) whether Government have taken any action consequent to the withdrawal?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU): (a) A few hundred Naga people left the meeting at Kohima a little before the arrival of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Burma.

(b) The reasons reported by them for their withdrawal were that they would not be allowed to present any representation at the meeting.

(c) Some days after the meeting, the Governor of Assam sent for two or three members of the Naga National Council and informed them that it was very improper of them to be discourteous to a distinguished guest of India, namely, the Prime Minister of Burma, Government took a serious view of this. No other action was taken as a result of this withdrawal. Some action, unconnected with this, was subsequently taken because of offences committed against existing laws.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: While fully agreeing with the hon. Prime Minister about the impropriety of withdrawing from a meeting where the Prime Minister of Burma was to be present, may I know if action, concerted action was taken on April 4th on the entire Naga territory and if so, what was that action?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: On Naga territory? No, there was no question of any Naga territory or anything like that. The action was taken entirely on individuals. It has nothing of governmental significance. I think it affected about a dozen persons or so. Against some of them it was stated they had some private feud. There was no question of any action on the whole territory. I do not know what the hon. Member means when he refers to entire Naga territory.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: May I invite the attention of the hon. Prime Minister to this report in *The Hindusthan Standard* of April 22, where it is stated on April 7, one day perhaps, there was a co-ordinated and concerted move on the part of the Assam Rifles and the Assam Police Battalion, with a number of C.I.D. officers; they surrounded the Visoma (?) village, and so many other things are described here, and it also said that they seized thousands of arms in the possession of the villagers and they arrested three persons without producing any warrant against them and left the village hurling threats and insults against the people. And there is a great deal more here. What I want to know is, if they were arrested; and if immediately after this meeting there was a complete search, a concerted search of the entire Naga territory and almost all the licensed arms even were taken away from the people, what were the reasons for all this?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I really do not know who is responsible for the report that the hon. Member read out. The fact is that this Naga territory is full of unlicensed arms since the Burma War and that has been giving considerable headache to the authorities there. Sometimes they do try to get hold of these unlicensed arms by searches. It is possible that some kind of concerted action was taken in regard to the searches for unlicensed arms. As a matter of fact some persons were arrested for the possession of unlicensed arms and amongst them is a foreign national and some proceedings are being taken

against him. I cannot give the precise figure up to date but my own information is that about a dozen Nagas were arrested round about that time for, as I said, specific activities; about half of them subsequently went on bail and their cases are going on in courts.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: May I know, Sir, what the reasons were for their arrest, if they were not connected with this incident?

HON. MEMBERS: For possession of unlicensed arms.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Not all for possession of unlicensed arms. The reasons were offences against the law; it may be that a day after, they have hit people, they have knocked down people and committed such type of offences.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: In view of the rather strange coincidence of these two incidents, may I respectfully ask the Prime Minister to enquire into this and try to check the information that he may have got from our bureaucrats who are there?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: There is no strangeness about the coincidence; they are connected. The Naga people often misbehave and action is taken against them.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: 'Misbehave'; where and in what manner do they misbehave?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: By becoming violent occasionally. As I said, as individuals and otherwise they become violent and misbehave and, as individuals, the police take action against them which is before the Courts.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Is it not a fact, Sir, that some of the leaders who have been arrested round about the beginning of April have been arrested for political reasons and not for violent activities?

(Interruption.)

SHRI B. GUPTA: (Stood up.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sit down, Mr. Gupta. He has put a question and the answer that has been given is "not connected with their withdrawal from the meeting".

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: I want to know what were the political reasons.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Offences committed against existing laws.

SHRI B. RATH: May I know how these arrests and searches synchronised with the visit of the Prime Minister?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Because action on the other side synchronised with his visit.

*647. [Postponed to 13th May 1953.]

INTERNATIONAL DISPLAY OF KNITTING AND CROCHET

*648. SHRIMATI PUSHPALATA DAS: Will the Minister for COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to participate in the International Display of Knitting and Crochet which is being arranged in London;

(b) if so, what arrangements are being made to select and send exhibits for display in the said exhibition; and

(c) whether this exhibition is in any way connected with that to be held during the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE (SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR): (a) and (b). India participated in the Display in London between the 3rd and 28th March 1953. Select and representative exhibits were invited and collected from institutions and parties concerned. The final selection of the exhibits was done by the Indian High Commission in accordance with the design of the Display and in consultation with its organisers.

(c) No, Sir.