

KMT blocks bill on party assets

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Democratic Progressive Party, New Power Party and Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) legislators hold up signs expressing their viewpoints during a general assembly meeting at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Lo Pei-der, Taipei Times

The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) caucus yesterday obstructed scheduled legislative proceedings to pass a bill on ill-gotten party assets by calling for votes on each first-reading bill on the floor agenda, of which there were more than 200.

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) caucus and the New Power Party (NPP) proposed to extend the meeting until midnight.

The legislative floor meeting commenced later than usual yesterday morning, as the DPP caucus had a prolonged caucus meeting, after which DPP caucus whip Ker Chien-ming (柯建銘) said the caucus planned to achieve two things — the passage of the bill on ill-gotten party assets and the announcement of a joint statement concerning the South China Sea ruling.

The latter was achieved, while the former had not been dealt with as of press time last night.

Soon after the general assembly meeting started, the KMT caucus demanded a roll call vote as the method of voting in yesterday's meeting, which DPP lawmakers and Legislative Speaker Su Jia-chyuan (蘇嘉全) said would have to be decided by a vote.

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DPP Legislator Wu Ping-jui (吳平九) shouted in the chamber: “The voting system we have now is already a name-registering vote. I see no reason why the KMT caucus has to raise the need to change it, other than to try to hamper legislative proceedings and protect their party assets.”

The voting system in the general assembly chamber consists of two electronic boards at the front of the chamber that display the names of lawmakers and flashes green, red or yellow for “yea,” “nay” and abstain respectively.

NPP Executive Chairman Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌) also criticized the KMT caucus, saying its measures were “ridiculous” and calling on the party to “stop throwing a fit and step back from the brink.”

KMT lawmakers, all clad in blue in a show of solidarity, from that point on called for a roll call vote, a vote and a revote for each first-reading bill that was to be referred to committees for review by dissenting against which committees the proposals were to be referred to.

There were a total of 276 cases to be referred to committees on the floor agenda yesterday.

In the morning, only six of the 276 were processed. Under typical legislative procedures, the second and third readings of bills on the discussion agenda would be dealt with only after all the committee-referral cases were done.

In the front of the chamber, the KMT lawmakers held up placards and chanted slogans demanding that President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) report to the Legislative Yuan on the recent accidental launch of a missile and a ruling on the South China Sea by an international court.

One placard asked if Tsai was a US lackey, while another read: “An inch of [our] mountains and rivers [equals] an inch of [our] blood,” a phrase first used by the Republic of China’s armed forces during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

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“Defend our sovereignty and protect our fishing rights,” was another slogan the KMT lawmakers repeated.

In the middle of voting in the evening, NPP Legislator Freddy Lim (林錫山) discovered that newly elected KMT caucus convener Sufin Siluko (蘇芬) was pressing the voting button for former legislative speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平), who was absent, which was condemned.

KMT lawmakers later accused DPP lawmakers of voting for other legislators who had temporarily left their seats.

Yesterday was the last day of this year’s first legislative session.

Two extraordinary sessions later this month and next month are expected to be called, the DPP caucus said earlier this week.

The legislature was dealing with the 58th item on the agenda as of 9pm yesterday.

Additional reporting by Abraham Gerber

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