

(b) There is no truth in this press report.

(c) There has been no delay in the appointment of a regular Director for the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delh'. Under the provisions of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Rules, 1958, appointment to the post of Director is made by the Institute with the prior approval of the Central Government. The approval of the Central Government as required under rule 7(3) of the A.I.I. M.S. Rules, 1958 to the appointment of Dr. L. P. Agarwal as Director of the Institute for a period of 5 years with effect from 18th February, 1979 or till he attains the age of 62 years, whichever is earlier was conveyed to the Institute on 4th April, 1979.

(d) The All India Institute of Medical Sciences has stated that the following steps have been taken to streamline the hospital administration and to provide maximum satisfaction to the suffering patients.

- (i) Increasing the number of emergency beds in the Casualty.
- (ii) Doing away of levying charges on the basis of income of the patients in respect of the patients treated in O.P.W. No charges are levied in case of patients admitted in the casualty at the time of admission.
- (iii) No indoor patient is asked to purchase any medicines from outside except in exceptional cases where medicine is not available and is needed very urgently for a serious patient.
- (iv) Indigent patients and parents of children are exempted from payment of diet charges.
- (v) Improvement in the hygienic system of the hospital by restricting the attendants to the patients in the hospital.
- (vi) By providing new shelter for the relatives of the patients who come from far off

places by expending dormitory accommodation in the existing Rajgarhia Vishram Sadan.

- (vii) By providing investigations free of charge except for special investigations like Brain scanning with EMI Scanner and all orthopaedic and dental appliances including artificial dentures.
- (viii) Opened a Revolving fund for the purpose of heart valves and other accessories and medicine for heart operations on no profit no loss basis.

#### **Pregnancy Test Drugs deform Babies**

9571. SHRI VASANT SATHE.

SHRI CHIMAN BHAI H. SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government have been drawn to the news report appearing in the News Magazine 'Onlooker'—April 1—15, 1979—Bumby under the caption "Pregnancy test drug can deform babies—ban them—";

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Government to the various observations of serious nature therein (observations-wise);

(c) facts of the matters; and

(d) details of steps taken/proposed to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI RABI RAY): (a) Yes.

(b) to (d). The salient observations made in the news report are as under:

(i) Drugs containing synthetic hormones which are widely used in India to conduct pregnancy tests are highly dangerous and women exposed to them during early pregnancy may

face an increased risk of giving birth to deformed babies.

(u) Hormonal pregnancy tests are unreliable in pregnancy diagnosis. The news report refers to a certain study conducted by Dr. Palaniappan, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Kilpauk Medical College, Madras, which shows that the hormonal pregnancy tests are not reliable

(ii.) retrospective study carried out by Dr. Palaniappan on mothers who gave birth to babies with congenital defects shows that 31 per cent of them had taken hormonal preparations during early pregnancy often with a view to terminate pregnancy.

(iv) These hormonal products have been banned or withdrawn in six countries.

(v) A demand has been made that the Government of India should ban these drugs immediately.

In 1975 following reports of the withdrawal of hormonal pregnancy preparations in certain countries on grounds of their questionable safety and the fact that there are adequate and reliable methods available for pregnancy diagnosis, which do not involve the administration of hormones, the Drugs Controller (India) consulted a number of Gynaecologists in the country seeking their opinion as to whether the use of hormonal preparations for pregnancy test should be discontinued. The majority of the experts consulted were of the view that in the absence of facilities in a majority of the hospitals in the country for carrying out Immuno-assay methods for diagnosis of pregnancy it would not be desirable to withdraw these preparations completely from the market and recommended that the manufacturers may be required to include a warning about the possible hazards of congenital malformations when these preparations are administered early in pregnancy, as has been recommended by U.K. Committee on Safety of Medicines. These preparations may be permitted for pregnancy diagnosis only when its termi-

nation has been decided. Accordingly, manufacturers marketing these hormonal preparations were required not to promote these products for use in pregnancy diagnosis. They were, however, permitted to continue to market them for indications, such as secondary amenorrhoea when pregnancy has been excluded. They were also asked to revise their package inserts, medical literature, etc., so as to incorporate the following warning therein—

**Warning:** There is some evidence to show that hormonal preparations when used during pregnancy may lead to foetal abnormalities and as such these should not be used during pregnancy or for pregnancy diagnosis unless a decision has been taken to terminate the pregnancy after its confirmation.

However, in view of the reported misuse of these hormonal products for purposes of abortion, it is proposed to re-examine the question of continued marketing of these preparations in consultation with medical experts in the field.

#### P. F. Subscribers,

9572 SHRI MANOHAR LAL:

Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state—

(a) what is total number of Subscribers covered under the Employees' Provident Fund and M.P. Act, as on 31st March, 1979 exempted and un-exempted, separately;

(b) whether the same number of accounts are taken into consideration while sanctioning the staff and whether the staff has been sanctioned accordingly; and

(c) if not, why not?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. RAM KIRPAL SINHA): (a) The total number of subscribers covered under the Employees Provident Funds and Misc.