

**14.11 hours**

*Announcement re : Postponement of the sitting of the House upto 14.25 hrs for want of quorum.*

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL : There is no quorum. So, the House, cannot meet; and we cannot start the House till there is a quorum. The Deputy-Speaker has directed that the House will meet at twenty-five minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

**14.11½ hrs.**

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till twenty-five minutes past fourteen of the clock.*

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Twenty-eight minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.*

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

**14.28 hrs.****MATERNITY BENEFIT (AMENDMENT) BILL —**

*As passed by Rajya Sabha — Contd.*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now I call Dr. Vasant Niwruutti Pawar to speak.

The time allotted to this Bill was one hour. Many hon. Members have already discussed this Bill in detail. Mostly the hon. lady Members have contributed to a very great extent. So, if there are any relevant points, you kindly make them.

DR. VASANT NIWRUTTI PAWAR (Nasik) : Sir, I will take only ten minutes and not more than that.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, at the outset I thank you for giving me this opportunity to take part in the debate on the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill.

I am on my legs to support this Bill. This Bill has been brought to regulate the employment of women. The principal Act, this is, the Maternity Act 1961 and the MTP Act 1971 have to be taken into account. The principal Act provides six weeks duty leave to a case of abortion—now it is to be extended for MTP—two weeks duty leave for the Tubectomy patients and four weeks duty leave if there is any illness following abortion or Tubectomy or MTP, which has been extended to MTP.

In the principal Act as it has been said, there is no break in duty for breast feeding. But in the amending Bill two breaks have been allowed during the service for breast feeding, for the mother to go to the creche and breast feed the child till the child becomes 15 months old. This is the provision made in the amending Bill.

The other most important provision is that if there is a death following any abortion or miscarriage or MTP or tubectomy a working woman is given the benefit till the day of her death. The total benefit has been given. In some establishments the medical bonus up to Rs. 250 has also been included which should also be increased. But that is also a proviso. There is a restriction on the employer. If somebody is on maternity leave the employer cannot dismiss

that woman from service. The benefit should be given within 48 hours after the demand. Otherwise, the employer is liable to a punishment from three months to one year including a fine from Rs. 2,000 to 5,000. These are the provisions in the Principal Act of 1961.

The amendment we are discussing here is for adding medical termination of pregnancy. The object of this Amendment is two-fold: First is to promote the family welfare or the women's welfare and the child welfare, at the same time to think of population control because the MTP is definitely being increasingly used in the recent past to have a proper planning of children to keep a proper gap so that the children get good nourishment, good health. If there are continuous deliveries the previous child is always deprived of breast feeding and that is why the chances of casual care are there. That is why this Bill has been brought. Actually this provision must have been brought by the Government quite early. It is now too late. But, anyway, they are thinking in terms of welfare of the women. I congratulate the Government. (Interruptions)

SHRI DILEEP BHAI SANGHANI (Amreli) : On a point of order. There is no quorum in the House.

DR. VASANT NIWRUTTI PAWAR : Please, there is no point of order. Let us not take him seriously.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No. Whenever any hon. Member were to raise the question of quorum it is the duty of the Chair to consider it. That is the precedent. Our friend has raised the question of quorum.

*The bell is being rung*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now there is a quorum. Dr. Vasant Pawar may continue his speech.

DR. VASANT NIWRUTTI PAWAR : Thank you Sir. I was talking on the point of population control and family welfare. Our Government has rightly set up the targets to be achieved by the year 2001 AD. These are : (i) to bring down the birth rate to 21 per thousand; (ii) to bring down the infant mortality rate, which is the most important thing, to 60 per thousand; (iii) to bring down the death rate to 9 per thousand; and (iv) to have the national reproductive rate at one per cent. For this purpose this amendment will be quite beneficial. We are expecting a population of 100 crore by the year 2011 AD and we are now having 16 per cent of the world's population on 2.14 per cent of the world's land area. We have to think in terms of population control. The objective of this Bill is to give health for woman and child. This benefit was given to women in the Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941 and the Bombay Maternity Benefit Act, 1929. Both these Acts have been repealed because the benefit given was only on the ground that the working women have to do acrobatic work and there will be physical exertion and there are chances of abortion. That is why this has been withdrawn and now the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 is giving the benefit to all the women.

This Act is only for the working women who do service in many organisations. The main purposes of this are to give antepartum or anti-natal care to avoid complications and to facilitate normal delivery and to have a healthy child and to maintain nutrition and to reduce the infant mortality rate. That