

SECRETARY : Sir, I lay the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 1972, on the Table.

ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER BUSINESS

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I have to inform Members that the Business Advisory Committee at its meeting held today the 29th May, 1972 allotted time as follows for Government Legislative and other Business to be taken up during the current Session of the Rajya Sabha :—

	Business allotted	Time
1. Consideration and Passing of:—		
(a) The Delhi Co-operative Societies Bill, 1972.	2	hours.
(b) The General Insurance (Emergency Provisions) Amendment Bill, 1972.	1	hour.
(c) The Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 1972.	30	minutes.
(d) The Taxation Laws (Extension to Jammu and Kashmir) Bill, 1972.	1	hour.
(e) The Constitution (Thir-ty—first Amendment) Bill, 1972	2	hours.
(f) The Constitution (Thir-ty-second Amendment) Bill, 1972.	1	hour.
(g) The National Service Bill, 1972.	2	hours.
(h) The Aligarh Muslim University (Amendment) Bill, 1972.	4	hours.
(i) The Delhi Lands (Res-trictions on Transfer) Bill, 1972.	1 hr. 30	mts.
2. Consideration of motions for concurrence in the recommendation of Lok Sabha for reference of the following Bills to Joint Committees:—		
(a) The Mines (Amendment) Bill, 1972.	1	hour.

- (b) The Untouchability (Offences) Admendment and Miscellaneous Pro' vision Bill, 1972. 1 hour.
- (c) The General Insurance (Nationalisation) Bill, 1972. 1 hour.

The Committee also recommended that the House should sit up to 6.00 p. M. daily and beyond 6.00 P. M. as and when necessary for the transaction of Government Business.

THE GENERAL INSURANCE (EMER- GENCY PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL, 1972

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI) : Sir, I beg to move :

"That the Bill to amend the General Insurance (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1971, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

An Ordinance was issued on 13th May, 1971 which provided for the vesting of the management of the undertaking of general insurance companies in Government pending nationalisation of their business. Subsequently an Act was passed replacing the Ordinance, which took retrospective effect from the 13th May, 1971.

The Ordinance and Act followed closely similar legislation which was enacted at the time of nationalisation of life insurance business. However, unlike on the previous occasion, certain difficulties have arisen in the working of the Act. It has been contended that since only the management has been taken over, and since the ownership continues to vest with the previous management, the shareholders are still competent to decide in what manner the management should be carried on. As a logical corollary, it has been contended that the shareholders can have the power to decide that the carrying on of general insurance business should be discontinued. Two such cases have arisen. At an extraordinary general meeting of an insurer, a resolution was passed deciding to discontinue general insurance business with effect from the 1st January, 1972 and the Custodian was requested to comply with the resolution. On his failing to do so, the company, Board of

Directors and shareholders filed a petition before the High Court for the issue of writs on the Custodian and the Central Government to implement the resolution of the shareholders. On this petition the High Court has decided that the right to manage an undertaking is different from the right to decide what business a company should or should not carry on. According to the High Court's judgement, therefore, the resolution must be given effect to, under the Act as it stands and the Custodian and the Central Government were, therefore, directed by the High Court to discontinue new insurance business, so far as the particular insurer is concerned.

The Board of Directors of another insurer gave notice some time back of a resolution purporting to amend the Memorandum and Articles of Association for commencing a new line of activity. The effect in this is the same as in the previous one, namely, that the transaction of new insurance business should be stopped. It is possible that other insurers also might pass similar resolutions.

The Act provides for the payment of adequate compensation to the previous management for deprivation of their right to manage the undertaking of the insurer. The intention of the Act has all along been that all powers of management, including the carrying on or otherwise of the general insurance business, vested in the Custodian so that the Board of Directors or the shareholders can have no say in the matter.

The judgment of the High Court referred to earlier and the attitude of the previous management in some other cases has made it necessary to amend the Act to make the intention absolutely clear by explicitly providing that the custodians alone shall have the powers of management whether the powers are derived from the Companies Act or the Memorandum and Articles of Association or from any other source. It is also necessary to clarify that any resolution passed by the previous Board of Directors or shareholders, shall not have effect unless approved by the Central Government. These provisions are now necessary to be enacted so that resolutions are not passed by the previous management which have the effect of creating difficulties in the smooth implementation of the process of nationalisation. Hon. Members will, therefore, appreciate that what is now proposed is only to make clear beyond all doubt the

intention that all powers of management should vest only in the custodian.

The opportunity has been availed of to make two minor amendments which are of a clarificatory nature. The first one is an amendment in section 6 of the Act. It will be noticed that the compensation referred to in section 6 is related to the average quantum of dividends distributed for the years 1967, 1968 and 1969. The wording used in the Act namely "during the years" might be interpreted as referring to a dividend/distributed in these years even though it might relate either to these years or to any earlier year. What is relevant is, however, only the dividends distributed for any of these years. The proposed amendment seeks to remove the ambiguity.

So far as foreign insurers are concerned, the management compensation under section 6 is based on the net premium income of the undertaking of the insurer during 1969. Since some foreign insurers transact insurance business outside India through their Indian branches, they might include the foreign premium income written by the Indian branch for calculating the amount of compensation. This was not the intention and the second amendment proposed clarifies that only premium written in India will be taken into account.

It will be appreciated that the amendments proposed under this Bill are intended only to remove doubts about the powers of the custodians and to make clarificatory verbal amendments. No new principles are being enacted. I seek the support of all the Members of this House to pass this measure. Sir, I move.

The question was proposed.

SHRIBALACHANDRA MENON
(Kerala): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, this Bill has become absolutely necessary because the High Court merely stated that management does not mean taking over of the property. You only manage, you do not take over. Unless it is clearly stated that you are taking over the property, you cannot just say that by the right of management you have become the owner, and it is quite right. I wonder why, when the Ordinance was passed, it could not be seen; I wonder why the Law Department was not able to find it out. It is a very simple thing. It differs from the right of management

[Shri Balachandra Menon] and they should have seen it. Anyhow, it is good that they have at least brought forward this amending Bill and it will save us from further troubles. And I am glad that at least now we have thought it fit that a Bill of this type is necessary. I therefore welcome it, and at a time when we are thinking of nationalising general insurance, it is absolutely necessary that we see that all the loopholes are plugged so that, again, we are not unnecessarily dragged into the court,

SHRI B. K. KAUL (Rajasthan): There are so many loopholes.

SHRI BALACHANDRA MENON: But as far as possible, we must be in a position to plug all these loopholes. It is a step in the right direction that the Government has taken.

SHRI B. K. KAUL : Mr. Deputy Chairman, I welcome this amending Bill. Still I think that the Government is lagging behind in waiting for the nationalisation of the general insurance companies. They are going step by step and I do not know why they forget that these steps might in the long run hamper the progress of the nationalisation of general insurance business.

They have appointed the Custodians. And from what kind of personnel ? They have appointed Custodians out of the employees of the general insurance companies. And there are certain Custodians who were appointed by this Government and who were against nationalisation. They were basically against nationalisation and this Government, unaware of their activities, appointed such employees as the Custodians. And you will yourself realise, such people who are basically against the nationalisation of general insurance, when they have got the power to act as the Custodians of the companies, what would be the fate of those companies and of the policyholders? They must understand it. I have got certain experience of these insurance companies. They are very apathetic, they want to bring discredit to the Government. The sooner the government take over the entire companies from their hands, the better, would it be. As a matter of fact, if they nationalise them they will be doing justice to the policy which we have taken so far as nationalisation is concerned. It is good that they have tried to remove the loopholes. But are they going to remove the basic loophole, which will not be removed unless general insurance is entirely nationalised ?

The foreign insurers, I must submit, Sir, have kept the doors open for foreign exchange to go outside India. These foreign insurers are carrying on their business here and the money which they get goes out of India. How are we going to plug that ? The best course would be to take over that insurance from their hands. I would like to say whether [they have taken those steps or not ? They should plug all those loopholes which help the foreigners to take out foreign exchange. So these are the things which I would like the Government to see and see through. I am sure this Bill will not be the panacea for the ills which the insurance companies suffer from.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The other Bill for nationalisation is coming. It has already been introduced in the Lok Sabha.

SHRI B. K. KAUL : With these words I support the measure.

श्री रणवीर सिंह (हरियाणा) : डिप्टी चेयरमैन, सर। मैं सामान्य बीमा (आपात उप-बन्ध) संशोधन विधेयक का समर्थन करने के लिये खड़ा हुआ हूँ। हमें खुशी है कि आज फिर दुबारा इस सदन में अपने विचारों को प्रगट करने का अवसर हमको मिला। उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, 4 करोड़ से ज्यादा रुपया हमने इन बीमा कम्पनियों के मालिकों को दे दिया, लेकिन उनके तमाम कर्मचारियों का बोझ हमारे सिर पर है। चाहिये तो यह था कि जिस वक्त हमने यह पहला विधेयक पास किया था उसके अन्दर हम यह रख देते कि जो शेयर्स की असल कीमत है सिर्फ उसका ब्याज हम देंगे और शेयर्स का जो बाजारी भाव है उसके ऊपर ब्याज नहीं देंगे। उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं तो अब भी आपको मार्फत सरकार से निवेदन करूंगा कि अब भी एक संशोधन इसमें कर दिया जाय चूंकि असल राष्ट्रीयकरण करने के बिल पास करने में और राष्ट्रीयकरण करने में शायद काफी समय लगेगा। उसके ऊपर फिर हमको दो तीन चार करोड़ और देना पड़ेगा। अगर सिर्फ हम उस पर सूद दें तो सूद सिर्फ उतने रुपये पर दें जितनी की शेयर्स की फेशल वैल्यू है। ऐसा होने पर कुछ लाख में ही

हमारा पिंड छूट जायगा। उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आप जानते हैं कि आज हमारा देश किस सीढ़ी पर पहुँच गया है। हम जमीनों को लेना चाहते हैं, जागीरों को नहीं। जो छोटे छोटे काश्तकार 30 या 35 एकड़ के मालिक हैं उनकी जमीनें लेकर हम गरीबों को देना चाहते हैं और उसकी कीमत बाजार भाव की नहीं देंगे बल्कि उसकी कीमत साल में वे कितना रेंट देते हैं उस हिसाब से लगायेंगे। मैं समझता हूँ कि वह बाजार भाव का एक बड़ा सौ बँडेगा।

श्री उपसभापति : इस बिल से इसका क्या ताल्लुक है।

श्री रणवीर सिंह : इस बिल से यह सम्बन्ध है कि हमने 4 करोड़ रुपया पहले दिया था और राष्ट्रीयकरण में अगर और समय लगा तो तीन चार करोड़ रु० और देंगे। तो मैं यह चाहता हूँ और उसको जस्टिफाई करने के लिये यह निवेदन कर रहा था कि समाज में भूमिदारों के मुकाबिले में दूसरे अंगों के साथ हम कैसा सलूक करने जा रहे हैं और कब तक यह दो तरह का सलूक समाज के अन्दर चलेगा। यह मेरा इसके अन्दर रिफ़ेंस है।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं इस के साथ साथ यह भी कहना चाहता हूँ कि अभी इस सदन के सामने वह बिल आया नहीं है, लेकिन जब हम राष्ट्रीयकरण करें तो इन शेयर्स की मार्केट वैल्यू की बात न सोचें, उन शेयर्स की जो फ़ेस वैल्यू है उसका हिसाब रखें और अभी तो हमने संविधान बदला है, आप जानते हैं कि इस सदन में थोड़े से वोट की कमी रह गयी और उसके कारण ही लोक सभा टूटी। गलती हमारी थी और उसकी सजा दूसरे सदन को मिली। तो देश के सामने हम इस बात को साबित करें कि संविधान बदलने में हमारा इरादा नेक था और उसके लिए जरूरी होगा कि जिस तरह से बैंकों का राष्ट्रीयकरण हमने किया और उसके हिस्सों की कीमत पता नहीं हमने कितनी दी, उसी तरह से बीमा कंपनियों का जब हम नेशनलाइजेशन करने जायें तो

उसकी कीमत नामिनल दें, मार्केट की कीमत न दें तभी संविधान को जो हमने बदला है उसका सही अर्थ हम निकाल सकेंगे।

SHRI N. G. GORAY (Maharashtra) : Sir, I do not want to take much of your time. There is no question of opposing this Bill. But the very fact that the Government had to come forward with this emergency Bill shows how lackadaisical we were when we took over the general insurance. Sir, we continued with the system of custodians and the final Bill which completes the process of nationalisation is yet to come. I just want to point out to the Minister that now that it has been introduced in the Lok Sabha and it is to come to the Rajya Sabha, it is likely that there will be a Select Committee and the Select Committee will take another six months, and most probably before the next year we will not have the final Bill at all. Sir, I would like to point out that giving such a large margin to all these people, custodians, shareholders, etc., who, as my colleague here pointed out, were against nationalisation of general insurance, will mean giving them opportunities of picking out holes in the whole system. Really they can sabotage the whole scheme. I do not know how far this emergency Bill will plug all the holes. But there may be other holes, I do not know, and it may be that they will try to take advantage of these. So, I would request the Government to make haste with the Bill which seeks to complete the process of nationalisation, so that there will be no chinks left in their armour and it will be possible to reap the maximum benefit out of what we have done already.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank all the hon. Members for having given their unstinted support to this amendment Bill. This is precisely what we have been anticipating because we realise that Members are very keen that the nationalisation Bill should come as soon as possible and, therefore, they do not have many points to raise now. The nationalisation Bill has already been introduced in the other House and I think very soon it will go to a Select Committee, and hon. Members will have a chance to express their views there. But certain points have been mentioned here and I would like to clarify them.

The first and foremost is the charge that we have been bringing piecemeal legislation

[Shrimati Sushila Rohatgi] and the Government has not been doing things at one stroke. Personally I do not know how we can do everything in one stroke. The Government has to understand all the intricacies and the complications which are behind a certain legislation. This was a very complicated issue and I think all the hon. Members will share this view. Even at the time of the nationalisation of life insurance, this was precisely the procedure followed and the same formalities were followed at that time. But no eventuality arose at that particular time. Now we are facing certain difficulties. It is not that there has been any negligence on the side of the Finance Ministry or the Law Ministry. It is a developing time. We are free-thinking people, independent people. Certain exigencies have arisen and it is in order to combat these difficulties that this amendment Bill is here.

The other point is that we should have tried to do it as soon as possible, that about a year has passed in this process and a compensation to the tune of Rs. 33 lakhs a month has been paid. It is not that the Government wanted to oblige anybody by doling out money to anyone. We had been working upon certain things like what type of organisation should be there, whether there should be one corporation or there was need for more, what was the area of the competition, whether it should be in certain regions or it should be for the entire country as such.

Therefore, all these eventualities had to be taken into consideration and this was the least time that could have been worked upon, and I think it is a good thing that the Bill is already introduced in the other House. The other point made was that the Government had not thought of these things before and that we had started thinking only now. It is not correct to say that. The Government has been continuously thinking taking into consideration all these practical obstacles in the way, and it is only on the basis of that we have come forward with this. There is a very big challenge before us. We want to make these public undertakings, all these nationalised undertakings, a success. There is the question of public accountability. And as such when we come to Parliament, all those factors have to be taken into account. That is why there was a little time taken and that, I think, would be appreciated by the House. Mr. Kaul raised a pertinent ques-

tion and that was about reinsurance. I am afraid he is not here now, yet I would like to go on record...

SHRI NAWAL KI SHORE (Uttar-Pradesh) : We are here.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI : All right, if you share his concern, I might clarify that point. Mr. Nawal Kishore, you did not speak ; I thought you were interested in the Bill...

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE : I will speak in the third reading.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He will speak on the other Bill.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI : Then we missed a very good speech ; even otherwise, he is a very good speaker.

Even now the maximum possible reinsurance is retained within the country itself. Only where the risks are too large to be retained within the country they are re-insured abroad. Even foreign insurers have to comply with this discipline in respect of the business written by them in India, I think that will satisfy the point. In regard to reinsurance there is one point more. Some foreign insurers reinsure their business in a block along with their head office business. Of course, this source of loss will be plugged when notionalisation is complete. So I think this will allay the fears. Then there is another point, a very relevant point. One honourable Member suggested that there were some custodians who are opposed basically to the idea of nationalisation of general insurance. There are two or three custodians who were opposed to the idea of nationalisation of general insurance, but they were interested in insurance business as such. Therefore, when the idea came for nationalising the general insurance, they, being committed to general insurance, have been working loyally and no case has been brought to our notice where we can doubt their loyalty to general insurance as such. Therefore, that fear need not arise at all. There is another point which has been mentioned, that some companies have not appointed custodians. I will have to clarify that point also. There are only four insurers where custodians have not been appointed, and they are, the Oriental Fire and General Insurance, Company Ltd., Jupiter General Insurance Company Ltd., the Indian Guarantee Insurance Co. Ltd., and the India

Reinsurance Corporation. Of these the first three are in the public sector and are subsidiaries of the LIC. The previous board of management will continue to manage these on behalf of the Government now. As regards the fourth company, the India Reinsurance Corporation, its shares are held by the other insurance companies and hence there is no need for the appointment of a separate custodian. I think all the points that have been raised have been covered now. With these words, I hope I receive the unanimous support of the House.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The question is:

"That the Bill to amend the General Insurance (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1971, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up the clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 4 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI: Sir, I move :

"That the Bill be passed."

The question was proposed.

श्री नवल किशोर : उपसभापति जी, यूँ तो सिद्धान्ततः भी मैं इस विधेयक का पूर्णतया समर्थन करता हूँ और दूसरे यूँ भी श्रीमन्, चूँकि हमारी और डिपुटी मिनिस्टर साहिबा की एक म्यूचुअल मेन्टल अंडरस्टेन्डिंग भी है कि जो भी वह बिल पेश करेंगे मैं उसको जरूर सपोर्ट करूँगा। यह मेरी और उनकी दिल की अंडरस्टेन्डिंग है।

श्रीमती सुशीला रोहतगी : यह भाभी देवर का पुराना रिस्ता है।

श्री नवल किशोर : इसलिए सिद्धान्ततः भी और म्यूचुअल अंडरस्टेन्डिंग के कारण भी इसको सपोर्ट करता हूँ।...

श्री उपसभापति : यह बहुत खतरनाक

अंडरस्टेन्डिंग है, आप समझ लीजिए। आप अपोजिशन में बैठे हैं।

श्री नवल किशोर : श्रीमन्, हमारे और उनके बीच में कोई अपोजिशन नहीं है।

श्री रणवीर सिंह : यह दिल की बात है।

श्री नवल किशोर : हाँ, तो हमारे और उनके बीच में कोई अपोजिशन नहीं है। दूसरी बात मैं यह कह रहा था कि उन्होंने बहुत खूबी के साथ सब बातों का जवाब दिया मगर एक टिकलिस प्वाइन्ट जो था, उन्होंने छोड़ दिया। कौल साहब ने जनरल इन्श्योरेंस की बात कही और फारेन इन्श्योरेंस कम्पनी की बात भी कही कि आपकी जो नेशनलाइजेशन की पालिसी है उसके अन्तर्गत वह भी नेशनलाइज की जायेगी क्या? मैं चाहता हूँ डिपुटी मिनिस्टर महोदया उस पर भी प्रकाश डालेंगी कि जो फारेन इन्श्योरेंस कम्पनीज इन्डिया में आपरेट कर रही हैं उनके नेशनलाइजेशन का बिल कब ला रही हैं?

श्रीमती सुशीला रोहतगी : मैं माननीय सदस्य की बड़ी आभारी हूँ कि उन्होंने आंख मूंद कर इस प्रकार समर्थन कर दिया। यह तो भाभी और देवर का समर्थन उत्तर प्रदेश विधान सभा से चल रहा है, लेकिन वह जो कह रहे हैं कि हमारे दिल की अंडरस्टेन्डिंग है, तो मैं कहती हूँ भाभी का आदेश मानना है तो मस्तिष्क की भी अंडरस्टेन्डिंग कर लें, और वहाँ से उठकर यहाँ बैठ जाएँ, उसमें मैं उनका स्वागत करूँगी और मेरा खयाल है तभी वह अंडरस्टेन्डिंग पूरी होगी।

जहाँ तक दूसरी बात का सम्बन्ध है, जो उन्होंने आपत्ति अभी की है, मेरा खयाल है कि उनको ज्यादा रुकना नहीं पड़ेगा, अभी बिल इंट्रोड्यूस हो गया है और शीघ्र ही यहाँ आ जाएगा और आपके मन में जितनी शंका है, उसका समाधान हो जाएगा।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will now take up the National Service Bill, 1972.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE : This Bill we have finished in 25 minutes. The next one we will take up after lunch.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned till 2 P. M.

The House adjourned for lunch at fifty-eight minutes past Twelve of the Clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at two of the Clock—MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

THE NATIONAL SERVICE BILL, 1972.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let us now take up the National Service Bill, 1972. Yes, Mr. Pant.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SARI K. C. PANT): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the registration of qualified persons and for the rendering of national service by such persons and for matters connected therewith, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this Bill was introduced in the present Lok Sabha on the 5th April, 1972. It had been introduced earlier in the Fourth Lok Sabha on the 26th August, 1970. But, with its dissolution in December 1970, the Bill had lapsed. The Bill, as introduced, was passed by the Lok Sabha on the 22nd May 1972.

The main objective of the Bill is to ensure that engineers and doctors are made available in adequate numbers for the defence of our country and for other activities of national importance, such as, family planning programmes and health services for the rural areas, and construction of dams in remote and difficult areas, etc.

In the wake of the Chinese aggression, the Government had formulated a Compulsory Liability Scheme whereby engineers and doctors up to the age of 40 and 45 years respectively, in Government service or in public sector undertakings, were made liable to render service in the Armed Forces or on work relating to defence efforts anywhere in India or abroad for a period of four years. Experience has re-

vealed that the Compulsory Liability Scheme cannot by itself be relied upon to provide sufficient number of doctors and engineers for the Armed Forces of the Union or for other forms of national service. It is, therefore, considered necessary that this liability should be extended to all persons who hold recognised medical qualifications within the meaning of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, or a degree in engineering or technology, or both.

It is also felt that the Scheme should cover any kind of national service which the Government may specify and that the Scheme should not be restricted in its scope to defence efforts only. This will have the advantage of widening the base of recruitment to the Armed Forces of the Union and will also help in ensuring that doctors or engineers required for other activities of national importance in civilian departments become available.

The view has been expressed in some quarters that in view of the present availability in abundance of qualified engineers and the fairly easy position in regard to the availability of doctors, there is no necessity for a National Service Scheme, especially in peace time. It has also been contended that in the context of the present unemployment among engineers, the Bill would not serve any useful purpose. I would like to reiterate here that in spite of the fact that over 19,000 graduate engineers are seeking jobs at present, the Ministry of Defence are finding it difficult to recruit engineers in adequate numbers for defence purposes. Similarly, the vitally important programme of extending health and family planning services adequately to the rural areas has been affected because of the considerable shortage of doctors in the primary health centres. As on 30th June, 1971, out of 5,127 primary health centres in the country, 175 had no doctor whatsoever; 2810 centres had only one doctor against the normal sanctioned strength of two doctors. Even in the foreseeable future, difficulties in attracting a sufficient number of doctors to Government service in rural areas are likely to persist. The shortage has occurred in a pattern where one primary health centre caters to 80,000 to 1,00,000 population. The shortage would be further aggravated when the number of primary health centres is increased to ensure a more intensive coverage. The hon. Members are aware that owing to the unwillingness of doctors in some cases to go to rural areas and their tendency to stick to towns, the medical and health cover that we have been