

Shrimati Renuka Ray (West Bengal: General): Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support this amendment which I think is an extremely wholesome one. I was one of those who believed that a Second Chamber was not a necessity and that in fact in many of the smaller Provinces it will be a very expensive luxury. All the same, it has been incorporated in the Constitution with the avowed object that the Second Chamber was necessary as a revising Chamber. It was pointed out that inadvertently or otherwise it may be possible for the Lower House to pass legislation which it would find difficult to rectify later and the Second Chamber might serve the purpose of revision. This was the object put forward for which a Second Chamber was acceptable to the majority. But now we find that there are some who would like to have it in the form of a Chamber with dilatory functions. For if we are going to allow six months, if joint sessions are going to be allowed it would mean that the Second Chamber would not only be just for the sake of revising a Bill which has some defects, and which the Legislative Assembly itself would like to revise, but it would also be tantamount to acting as a dilatory Chamber, which would be extremely retrograde. Because we have agreed to having Second Chambers in some of the Provinces, it does not mean that we should give it more powers and have a Chamber with dilatory functions imposed in the Constitution. I myself am of the opinion that the purpose for which a revising Chamber has been sought to be put in was also not necessary because the President or Governor has the power always to send back a piece of legislation to the Assembly and any mistakes could be rectified through this procedure. However, if the majority felt otherwise and put the Second Chamber in the Constitution, there is no reason whatsoever to give it more power and thus hold up legislation, which may be very pressing and necessary. The dilatory powers would be injurious for the country and a very retrograde provision in the Constitution. I do feel that it seems to be the object of some of those who have spoken to bring in the type of Second Chamber that we had in the past. We talk of the composition being quite different; even if it is quite different, it is quite true that people, even if they were scientists or doctors, who go through the process of political life into Upper Chambers – or Lower Chambers for the matters of that – have to enter the arena of politics and Party Politics. Somebody said that Second Chamber would be for men like Rabindranath Tagore. But the best scientists and men of literature are not likely to enter Party Politics and come into the Second Chamber at any price. If their opinion has to be sought, it has to be sought from outside the Legislature in any case. Therefore, I would appeal that, although this House has agreed to a Second Chamber, it will not in any case agree to extending its powers, but accept this amendment which will give it only the functions of a revising nature.