

Shrimati Renuka Ray (West Bengal: General): Mr. Vice-President, I am one of those who hold the opinion that the bicameral legislature in the present context of things is unnecessary, if not retrograde. Sir, in India, particularly at the present moment, when we need to go through a good deal of legislation in the economic and social field, which has been long overdue during the years of foreign rule, I do feel that the Second Chamber, particularly in the provinces will be very dilatory. The only reason advanced for having a Second Chamber is that we can thus prevent hasty or careless legislation. But, Sir, when there is a Governor, in the Province and a President at the Centre, who is empowered to send back to the legislature any Bills which may have been enacted carelessly, for revision, I do not think that this excuse obtains. However, Sir, the majority of provinces have decided to have a Second Chamber and therefore, in the present Constitution, we shall be embodying it. I want to point out only this, that even if we at the present moment do have to agree to have Second Chambers in the provinces, there should be some provision in the Constitution that the Second Chambers can be got rid of as speedily as possible, not at the initiative or the votes of both Houses of Legislature in the provinces, but according to the desire of the Lower House alone. I do not think that it is right that whether a Chamber shall continue to exist or not, should be left to the Chamber to decide in any way. Although there is an Article in the Draft Constitution regarding the manner in which the provinces may decide later not to have Second Chambers, if they do not wish to, that Article prescribes that this can be done by both Houses of the Legislature. I hope, Sir, that when the time comes, at least the House and Dr. Ambedkar will agree that it should be the Lower House alone which shall decide whether the Second Chamber should continue or not. As I said before, I do not think that bringing in the Second Chamber is going to be helpful at the present moment. I do understand that the composition of the Second Chamber is going to be fundamentally different from the composition of the Upper Houses of the past. But all the same in the present context of things, as I have said, it will be very much better if we had just one Chamber. As we have seen during the past year or so, while this Constituent Assembly has been functioning as a Dominion Legislature and with an unicameral Chamber, even so the procedure by which legislation is enacted is slower than we desire. I do not see why it is necessary, particularly in the Provinces, that we should go in for a Second Chamber, and if we do so, at least let us provide that the Lower Houses in the Provinces are in a position to rid themselves of this encumbrance as soon as possible.