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* Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Labour Member): Sir, I move.

> "That the Bill further to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, be taken into considertion."

This is a very simple Bill and the purpose of the Bill is to rectify an injustice caused in the present circumstances to a workman who is drawing Rs. 300 as his wages. As Honourable Members are perhaps aware, under the definition of a "Workman" in the Workmen's Compensation Act, the right to compensation is limited to those workmen who draw up to Rs. 300 as their wages. Before the war it was possible for every workman who drew Rs. 300 as his wages to get the benefit of this Act. Since the introduction of War allowances and other measures such as the grant of dearness allowance, bonuses, good conduct pay and other payments which have been granted to the workmen what has happened is that a workman who formerly got compensation is now deprived of that compensation because his wages come to more than Rs. 300. This is due to the reason that under the definition of the term "wages" as given in the Workmen's Compensation Act all that extra remuneration which the workman gets other than wages is regarded as part of his wages for the purpose of computing his compensation. The result is that a workman who formerly was to get compensation now docs not get it. The Bill seeks to protect such a workman by increasing the maximum monthly wages from Rs. 300 to Rs. 400. The Bill therefore has two provisions in it, one is to amend the definition of the workmen so that instead of limiting the wages to 300 it raises to 400, and secondly, to amend schedule IV to the Act which prescribes the compensation which a workman is

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* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. I-No. 12, 8th February 1946, p. 714.

entitled to get for death, permanent total disability and temporary disability.

As I said, Sir, the Bill is a very simple measure. It merely copies what has actually been done in Great Britain. There too, in order to protect the rights of a workman who originally got compensation, the limit of wages has been raised from £ 350 to 425. The Bill is not only a simple measure, but it is also a non-contentious measure. The Provinces have been consulted with regard to the provisions of this Bill and they have unanimously agreed to the amendments which are made by this Bill. The proposal also was put forth before the Standing Labour Committee and there too it has secured the unanimous approval of all members of the Committee. Sir, I do not think I need expatiate at a very great length on the provisions of this Bill. With these observations, Sir, I move.

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* **Mr. President:** The question is

"That the Bill further to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

Clause I was added to the Bill.

The Title and the Preamble were added to the Bill.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Sir, I move.

"That the Bill be passed."

Mr. President: Motion moved.

"That the Bill be passed."

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† **Mr. President:** Has the Honourable Member anything to say ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : As I said this Bill is brought forward for the purpose of rectifying the injustice done to a particular class of workmen. It is not a Bill which is intended to do anything more than that. All that I can say at this stage is that I shall bear the points that have been made by my Honourable friends who have spoken on this Bill and see whether something can be done in order to give effect to the suggestions that they have made. I might tell the House that we

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. I-No. 12, 8th February 1946, p. 715.
† *Ibid.,* p. 716.

have in contemplation a Bill which deals with State insurance, which will include sickness insurance, workmen's compensation, maternity benefit, more or less on the lines of the social security measures adumbrated in England, and I think my friend will find that some of the suggestions, namely that the alteration of the system of lump-sum payments into periodical payments are being carried out in that measure.

Mr. President: The question is

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

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