

*ON THE CITY OF BOMBAY MUNICIPAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Bombay City, Byculla and Parel): Sir, I rise to support the amendment moved by the honourable member Mr. A. V. Chitre. Sir, the amendment is that in addition to the 4 councillors who are to be elected by the workers' delegates there should be two councillors elected by the municipal workers. Now, the reason why I think this amendment ought to be supported is this. There is no doubt about it that the municipal workers are directly interested in the administration of the Municipal Corporation. They are under the authority of the Municipal Commissioners, they are under the authority of the various officers employed by the municipality under whom they are working. Now, Sir, having regard to the municipal constitution, there is one thing which is clear and abundantly clear and that is that these municipal workers have no right of redress against any order that may be passed by their superior officers. Their position is certainly very much different from the position of the ordinary civil servant who is working under the Government of Bombay. For instance, any civil servant, whether he is employed in the provincial service or subordinate service, has a right of appeal given to him in the case of any order passed to his prejudice. There is no such provision in the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Any order may be passed by any officer against any municipal worker and that worker has no right of redress. One of the advantages this amendment will give to the municipal workers is that any order that may be passed by any officer under the Bombay Municipal Corporation, could be ventilated through their representatives on the floor of the Corporation and certainly this amendment will enable them to get some redress. They do not possess this advantage under the present constitution.

The Honourable Minister in charge said that we are now providing for adult franchise and, because we have provided for adult franchise, it is not necessary to provide any representation for organised labour. I am sure the Honourable Minister has not paid efficient attention to what provisions he has introduced in the Bill which is before us. What I would like to ask the Honourable Minister is this, whether in his opinion adult franchise is the

*B.L.A. Debates, Vol. 3, pp. 2807-08, dated 3rd May 1938.

sovereign remedy which the municipal workers can depend upon for obtaining sufficient representation. In that case, there is no necessity to provide for the representation of four councillors for labour. There is no need to provide for the representation of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, the Indian Merchants' Chamber and the Millowners' Association, because they can find representation through the ordinary channels of election. If adult franchise is sufficient for securing representation to labour, obviously the provision that is made for the four councillors to be elected by the delegates is unnecessary. Therefore, it is open to argument that the reason why it is provided that four places should be elected by labour is due to the fact that he is conscious of the fact that labour will not secure representation through the ordinary channels of election, although there may be adult franchise. If there is a necessity of providing representation for labour through labour constituencies then I submit that it is for better reason for providing special representation for the municipal workers who are far more interested in the constitution and working of the municipality than labour in general. I submit on this ground that this amendment ought to be supported by this House.

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