

The Government may be aware that a major portion of Western Rajasthan, that is, about 70 per cent of the districts, was under the grip of drought in the year 1996-97 as a result of which the people of this area were badly affected.

There is no water and fodder for the cattle. There is no employment for the people of this area as a result they are migrating to Punjab and Gujarat. The main source of income for the people of this area is through cattle breeding. But due to shortage of cattle feed, a large number of cattle is dying. There is acute shortage of cereals at the Fair Price Shops of the Public Distribution System.

Sir, I request the Central Government to take immediate action to solve this acute shortage of foodgrains in Barmer and Jaisalmer districts of Rajasthan.

- (iii) **Need to declare Patna-Hajipur-Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi-Sursand-Bhithamod road as a National Highway in Bihar.**

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the total length of National Highways in Bihar, which is the most backward state in the country, is 2118 kms. Since 1974 no approval has been accorded by the Government of India for the construction of any new National Highway in the state whereas during this period approximately one thousand kilometers have been added in the National Highway Network in the whole country. National Development Council had recommended to declare Patna-Bhithamod (bordering Nepal) road as National Highway but the Government of India has not taken any decision in this regard. After the devastating floods of 1987 the Government of India had given assurance to provide assistance for its reconstruction but it has also not been fulfilled. The Planning Commission has included this road in the 9th Five Year Plan.

Therefore, the Union Government is requested to declare Patna-Hazipur-Muzzafarpur-Sitamarhi-Sursand-Bhithamod road as a National Highway in the year 1997-98 and the work on it may be started.

- (iv) **Need for early execution of gauge conversion work at New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri-Alipurduar Junction**

[English]

PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS (Jalpaiguri) : Sir, I like to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that the gauge conversion work for New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri-Alipurduar junction line has not yet started. It is a long standing demand of the people of the area. The economy of the Jalpaiguri fully depends on this railway

line. The scheme has already been included in the 1997-98 Railway Budget but no step has yet been taken for its implementation.

I urge upon the Government to look into the matter and take necessary steps for execution of the scheme at an early date.

- (v) **Need to reintroduce Public Health Care Scheme in the Country**

[Translation]

KUNWAR SARVARAJ SINGH (Aonla) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, 'Jan Sawasthya Rakshaks' were appointed at Village level in 1977, for the development of Ayurvedic system of medicines and also for public welfare. Their services proved very useful for the primary medical care of the people. But for the last few years neither medicines are being provided to these Rakshaks nor their services are being taken. As such, these Rakshaks are facing a lot of difficulties in pulling on the livelihood and not in a position to foster their families, consequently they launched an agitation at State level in order to find out a solution to this problem as a result of which there is large scale resentment among the people.

Therefore, I urge that the genuine demands of these Rakshaks should be considered seriously and solution to this problem be found out to safeguard the interests of these Rakshaks as well as the people.

- (vi) **Need to provide more facilities at Dharagaon Railway Station, Maharashtra**

[English]

SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL (Erandol) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, my Parliamentary constituency Erandol (Maharashtra) has Dharagaon Railway Station. The population of this area is about 50 thousands. 25 villages are located nearby it. Thousands of people of this area travel from this station daily as a result of which rail department earns the income of thousands of rupees per day but there are inadequate facilities at this station, the people of this area have launched agitation for these facilities. The officers of railway have given assurance to provide these facilities. This railway station has the following problems :

1. At least 20 seats be reserved in passenger trains from this station.
2. Stoppage should be provided to the express trains passing through this station.
3. The level of the existing platform should be raised and it should be further extended.
4. Proper and bigger shed should be constructed for the passengers with increased capacity.