

[Shri Dal Chander Jain]

expenditure and it is the common people who have to suffer on this account. Therefore, it is essential that the Railway Department itself must construct those overbridges and underbridges over railway crossings which are at National highways near the district headquarters.

For example, the road traffic from Allahabad to Bombay, Kanpur to Bombay and Nagpur to Bombay, crosses the railway line at Sagar (Madhya Pradesh) and at Damoh. At least 10 passenger trains and 30 goods trains are running on these lines. If the crossing is closed for ten minutes for a single train, then it implies that the road traffic is held up for 400 minutes or 6 to 7 hours per day for so many trains. How much loss the nation has to incur because of it? The Railway administration can charge certain fees on truck permits for construction of the overbridges and approach roads.

Again, the smooth flow of road-traffic is interrupted very often on the national highways at the railway crossings which are located near the district headquarters due to the non-existence of overbridges and underbridges. Accidents also occur and the common people have to face great hardships. Therefore, I would request that over-bridges and under-bridges should be constructed by the Railways without insisting on any assistance from the State Government or its municipal bodies.

[English]

- (viii) Demand for improving telecommunication Services in Kangra, Hamirpur, Una and Bilaspur districts of Himachal Pradesh.

SHRI NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR (Hamirpur): The telecom. services in general and the trunk services in particular in Kangra, Hamirpur, Una and Bilaspur Districts of Himachal Pradesh (which have a community of interest) need considerable improvement. There is urgent need to provide more trunk centres by converting the existing SAXes (MAX III) at Jwalamukhi and Baijanath in Kangra District and Chintpurni in Una District in to CBNM/

CBM Exchanges. The waiting lists are also quite heavy—31 at Jwalamukhi and 48 at Chintpurni which are at present 100 line SAXes. I therefore, request the Minister for Communications to sanction the conversion of these 3 exchanges on a priority basis and provide for their early installation, as a special case. The conversion of the three other SAXes at Bhoranj and Barsar in Hamirpur District and Amb in Una District may also be approved after the conversion of the three Exchanges mentioned above during the Seventh Five Year Plan, as special cases. Similarly, all the 59 Post Offices downgraded and 6 closed down in Himachal Pradesh during the last three years including the current financial year should be returned to their original status and re opened respectively on account of difficult geographical terrain and sparse population.

There should not be any further down gradation and closures in future, as we cannot open or up-grade any new post offices on account of the ban on recruitment though over a hundred proposals are justified for opening new post offices on the basis of existing norms.

I request the Minister of Communications to accept both the please.

- (ix) Demand for assistance of rupees ten crores for relief of the victims of the recent earthquake in Kangra Valley of H.P.

SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI (Kangra): I would like to draw the attention of the House to the heavy damage which has been caused by the earthquake that rocked the Kangra Valley on 26th April, 1986.

I have personally visited the affected places and the damage to property is much more than was estimated by the initial reports. The total damage to houses and buildings has now been assessed to be nearly Rs. 65 crores as over 5000 houses have been completely damaged.

Over 50 villages falling between Chamunda and Shahpur have been badly hit. While about 50 per cent of the houses

have collapsed, the remaining have suffered extensive damage. The majority of the houses in the areas of the Kangra district have collapsed and about 80 per cent of the buildings at Dharmshala, Shahpur, Kangra, Palampur and Baijnath towns have development cracks.

To tide over the crisis caused by this earth quake, the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh has sanctioned Rs. 2 crores for providing immediate relief to the earthquake victims of Kangra District and I would urge upon the Centre that considering the gravity of the situation at least Rs. 10 crores may be straightway sanctioned pending the report of the high power central team which is assessing the losses, so that the sufferers of this natural calamity are enabled to repair and rebuild their houses before the rains set in. Action may also be urgently initiated to provide levy cement as well as subsidized timber on top priority basis for this purpose.

- (x) **Demand for construction of a National Highway linking Rajahmundry and Nagpur by a direct route.**

SHRI SRIHARI RAO (Rajahmundry) : At present there is no National Highway linking Rajahmundry and Nagpur by a direct route. If a direct National Highway is constructed, it will not only reduce the distance between Rajahmundry and Nagpur by at least 200 KM, but it would also link the four States and their borders as it will pass through the tribal belt of the four States namely Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The construction of this road will expedite the progress and development of the tribal people of these States and help them in joining the mainstream of national life. This will also develop their economy by enabling them to transport their forest product to the nearest markets. It may be mentioned that recently our Prime Minister stressed that transport facilities should be developed in tribal areas on a priority basis.

Another advantage of this highway will be that the Naxalites and other radicals and

dacoits who take shelter in the tribal belt will no longer be protected.

The construction of this national highway will not involve much expenditure as it will not be the construction of a totally new road.

I, therefore, request the Minister of Transport to give priority consideration to this project so that the tribal people of the four States may join the mainstream of national life.

- (xi) **Demand for protection of the indigenous industry manufacturing wattle extract used in leather tanning.**

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU (Gopichettipalayam) : The only indigenously manufactured wattle extract used in the leather tanning, which is an import substitution industry saving considerable foreign exchange to the extent of our production is situated at Mettupalayam in Tamil Nadu. Than India is at present providing employments to about 2000 tribals and Ceylon repatriates working in Nilgiris and Kodaikanal Reserved Forest, which are the main sources of raw material for our industry. Besides 600 personnel are employed at the factory. To our utter dismay, at a time when the industry was forging progress, the present import policy has suddenly and adversely affected this indigenous industry. In the current budget, import duty on wattle extract has been reduced from 87 per cent to 40 per cent for traders as well as for actual users and further an exemption is also given to exporters of leather that they will be allowed to import basic raw material namely wattle extract without payment of any import duty. While we appreciate that these facilities would encourage leather industry for boosting their export, this has unfortunately exposed the indigenous industry to a very great extent at the hands of foreign competitors. The recent concessions allowed will bring down the cost of import material considerably in general; whereas in the case of registered exporters, because of complete elimination of import duty, their material cost will be lower to the extent of Rs. 3000 to Rs. 350) compared to our current selling price.