

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.