

[English]

- (vi) **Need to constitute a team to study the causes of industrial Sickness in West Bengal and Suggest Remedial Measures.**

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Jadavpur) : The Industrial sickness in West Bengal is so serious that recently three children committed suicide to save their parents from starvation and humiliation. Their father was a worker in a private factory of Hawrah. I am afraid that if the Government do not take immediate steps to remove industrial sickness, the entire country may face a serious situation. I would, therefore, request the Union Government to constitute a survey team for proper study of the causes of industrial sickness and to suggest remedial measures.

- (vii) **Issue of 'no objection certificates' by Railway authorities, Bombay to the slum dwellers living on land owned by Railways to avail of the civic amenities provided by Municipal Corporation.**

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE (Bombay North Central) : The issue of providing civic amenities in slum located on lands owned by Railways in Bombay has been pending consideration for the last 8 to 10 years. There is no fixed policy of granting 'No objection certificate' by Railways for allowing the State Government or the Bombay Municipal Corporation to provide essential civic amenities to these hutment dwellers. It is creating uncertainty and confusion in such slums. When all other slums in Bombay are being provided with civic amenities, the slums of Railways land are generally deprived of these facilities. The Railway Ministry should take prompt decision in this matter and give instructions to their subordinate officers to give 'No objection certificates' to slums in Bombay in this respect.

- (viii) **Need to convert narrow gauge railway line between Rupsa and Bangri posi into broad gauge and to extend it to Bad ampahad mines.**

SHRI SIDHA LAL MURMU (Mayurbhanj): There is a narrow gauge railway line between Rupsa to Bangri Posi in my constituency which is about 20 Kms. from Badampahad where there is an iron ore mine. Lot of forest produce is being transported by rail/road. The narrow gauge railway line is unable to meet the demand of the area. If this narrow gauge line is converted into a broad gauge line, it can serve the people of this area much better. More people can travel conveniently and quickly and more goods can be transported.

I, therefore, request the Railway Minister to convert this narrow gauge line into broad gauge and extend it to Badampahad mines so that iron ore from Badampahad, Suleipat and Gorumohisani can be exported through Paradip Port directly by reducing the present route to about 200 Kms.

14.30.hrs.

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF
INDIA BILL (Cont.)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now we take up further consideration of the National Highways Authority of India Bill moved by Shri Rajesh Pilot on 24th November, 1988.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR (Hamirpur) : I rise to support the National Highways Authority of India Bill introduced by the Minister of State for Transport, Shri Rajesh Pilot.

National highways play an important role in linking one State with another. They also provide an efficient network for communication. There has been tremendous in-

crease in the fleet both buses and trucks during the last few years. A plan was drawn up by the Central Government known as Bombay Plan. That was from 1961 to 1981. Under the plan the net length of the national highways was expected to be 51,200 kms by the end of 1981. But upto March, 1978 only 28,970 kms of roads were constructed. This highlights the need for increasing the length of national highways. Only 2687 kms of national highways were constructed in the Sixth Plan. The target was to meet the increasing demand of 8 per cent in this regard, but there has been slackness and the target has not been achieved. The National Transport Policy Committee Report also gives various figures in this regard which show that unlike other modes of transport it is a common man's transport and the common man looks upon the road transport for his use.

The national highways provide an important sinew for the nation and also a model of network for the State Governments. It is ironical that the national highways are sanctioned and constructed on the recommendations of the State Governments, which have their own angle for selecting such routes whereas the angles of selection should be national. It should be beyond the consideration of the boundaries of a State that the national highways should be constructed. They should be constructed with the major consideration of easing the transport congestion and increasing the network of roads. There is the problem of agency functioning because so far the national highways are being constructed on agency system. The Central Government used to pay agency charges to the State Governments. The State Governments did not have its own resources. Therefore, the Central Government was looked upon as the showerer of gifts. So some new highways are coming up and the State Government would expect this as a replacement for their own commitment. Actually what should have been is that the State Governments should fulfil their own targets because the national highways should be no substitute for the work to be done by the State authorities. That should be on national consideration like defence.

In our State, the only two national Highway are No. 21 on one side and national highway number 22 on the other. National highway number 22 links Kaurik to Ambala cantt. and the other one links Chandigarh to Manali. The first one goes upto Indo-china border. This is a major route for the transport of armed forces and various other things. Earlier it was also called as Hindustan Tibet Road which was constructed by the Border Roads wing, in the construction of which many people lost their lives. Some time ago, Manali was linked with Chandigarh through national highway number 21. But the condition of this highway is worth recalling, because during the recent rains in September, this National Highway remained closed for 22 days. I happened to be there on the day 26.9.88 when the rain was the heaviest. From Swarghat, just on the border of Punjab and Himachal, it was blocked on almost all the curves and trees and other things had fallen and the road services were blocked for a number of days. Stretches were cleared for a week or two. The figure given by the Minister for Transport, in answer to one of my questions, is that Rs. seven crores is the estimated amount of damages on this road. Punjab also suffered and National Highways in Punjab also were heavily damaged. What I fail to understand is that in spite of this, the Union Government has not paid any attention to the creation of other important roads as National Highways which would create shorter routes and reach the same destination. I have been pleading with the hon. Minister for Transport for linking Jullundur via Hoshiarpur, to Amt. Nadayn and Hamirpur with Mandi so that this shorter route can give a better access up to Manali and then beyond that point up to Leh because to the Manali-Leh road, one of the highest roads in the country, has also been opened to public traffic now. So, this can be an alternative step in case of aggression from from Pakistan, and Jullundur cantt can be immediately linked with Leh and Manali and, therefore, this can be the easier route.

Whereas the State Government of H.P. has recommended the case of Mandi-Pathankot to be taken up as a National High-

[Prof. Narain Chand Parashar] way, it is a welcome step but it is a longer route. If somebody wants to reach Manali or Leh from Jullundur and via Pathankot by following National Highway No. 1 and the National Highway that is proposed to be created by the hon. Minister on the recommendation of the State Government, then extra hundred kilometres have to be travelled and so much of time would have to be lost, whereas the road I am suggesting would be shorter and would be safer from various angles. Pathankot is nearer the border. This road which I am suggesting is almost bisecting the two at an angle of 45° to reach there. So, I would plead that this may be considered for inclusion in the Eighth Plan.

The National Highway Authority is a welcome step for two things. One is that it creates its own Agency. It provide for matured consultations, experts, engineers, etc. who can give the right opinion. UP-till now, the only consideration for selecting the National Highways and for constructing them has been the recommendation of the State Government. The State Governments, in order to cover up their road inefficiencies, would recommend a road to be selected as a National Highway so that it can ease their problem. The National Highway Authority should not have the same approach. It should not be the substitute for the considerations which are already there with the State Governments. It should look from the national angle. Immediate security of the nation is number one, that is, strategic roads should be declared and constructed as National Highways. It should be shorter in the sense that they connect more areas and more States. Now, the proposal that I am making would connect Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal, and Punjab. Jullundur is a big cantonment and, therefore, it can be easily a point of mobilisation up to Leh and Jammu and Kashmir from an angle which is far safer as compared to the road from Srinagar to Leh or as compared to the road from Jullundur, Mukerian and Pathankot and then Pathankot to Jammu. It is not more than forty kilometres and from border at certain points.

At certain points it is even about twenty kilometres from the border. So, the National Highway suggested by me is quite safe and would be the best possible alternative from this angle.

The National Highway Authority gives more powers to the Union Government and also modulates the agency works because now you will have your own engineers and it would be a better supervision, whereas the functioning of the State Government Agency had been very poor. They were working on it only as an obligation to the Centre. Now you will have your own supervising authority for seeing that the important roads are constructed, maintained and also repaired. What is more important is the repair of the roads, and as many State boundaries should be crossed by this as possible because my own experience is that the Punjab Government would not bother about the roads linking Punjab to Himachal Pradesh. They would stop at Hoshiarpur, at Nangal or at Pathankot, and the rest of Punjab boundary, which lies towards Himachal, remains neglected for all times to come. The recent example for this is that Una to Hoshiarpur road and Hoshiarpur to Gagret road remained closed for full one month because the Himachal authorities would not enter this side and the Punjab authorities have no interest. Our telegrams to the Governor of Punjab were of no avail. The only reply was that other areas are more important. So, if other areas are more important, if core areas are more important for each one of the States of the country, who is going to look after the roads which are located on the border of the two States. People regard India as a nation. They do not regard India as one State ending here and another State going there. They require that the National Highways may be constructed on considerations of inter-State movement, on considerations of security, on national integration consideration, on catering to the needs beyond the provincial considerations, developing the harmony among the States, of cutting across the boundaries between one State and another and thereby it would be an important step. I would also plead with the

Government that there is another road—the Punjab Government may also support it—that is, the road which branches off towards Nangal Dam from the National Highway No 21. upto Manali at a place called Kiratpur. If it is taken to Una and Sansadpur Terrace and then to Batot via Kishwar in J & K, after crossing the river Beas, then we have the advantage of two national irrigation hydel projects, that is, Bakra Nangal Dam and the Pong Dam. Batot is already on the national highway leading to Srinagar and the road between Batot and Kishtwar is already a Central road and the link road to Badarva and Chamba in Himachal Pradesh is already under construction. In this way, we can have the National Highway linking J & K, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and ultimately this will touch Chandigarh. I request that the hon. Minister should accept the suggestion of including the two roads as national highways in the 8th Plan. The State Government may feel shy of recommending them. A State Government will only recommend the cases of road to be constructed as National Highway of 70 to 80% of the road passes through their State territories. Well, the Parliament should not have such considerations. They should consider not one or two States but should consider the interest of the entire country.

So, Sir, the National Highway Authority is a welcome institution and I welcome it. The experiences of the State Agency system would not be repeated and the short-comings should be improved upon. I am sure the National Highway Authority would be regarded not only as an efficient symbol of national transport system but also it would be regarded as as symbol of national integration. With these words, I thank you, Sir, and I support the Bill.

SHRI K. PRADHANI (Nowrangpur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Bill moved by the Surface Transport Minister to constitute a National Highway authority. The aims and objects of this Bill are to get rid of the State Governments' assistance and take charge of the construction and maintenance of the national highways. Sir, the

national highway No 43 passes through my constituency and it is a very backward and tribal area. The equally backward are is Bastar district which also comes under this highway. From Raipur to Visakhapatnam, the National Highway No. 43 passes through the Eastern Ghats on the border of Andhra Pradesh. I had to approach both the State Government as well as the Government of India often, to widen this road because of its importance. For widening and construction of this road, when I asked the State Government to take necessary action, they said that they had no money to take up this work. When I asked the Government of India for sanction of money for this work, they said that they had already allocated money for this purpose, but the State Government have not taken up this work so far.

Now, Sir, this problem can be solved by having a single window system of work for construction and maintenance of this National Highway by constituting the National Highway Authority which is now under consideration of the Government. Therefore, Sir, I welcome this Bill and heartily support this Bill.

Sir, the National Highway No. 43 passes through my constituency and it is a very important road in the area.

Sir, I would like to bring to your kind notice that there is a small railway line in that area and it is mainly catering to the needs of the Baildilla iron ore mine. The iron ore are taken from Bailadilla to Visakhapatnam port for the export of the same to Japan. There is a passenger-cum-goods train running on this line but it takes a lot of time to reach Visakhapatnam. It takes about 22 hours whereas the goods train carrying iron ore is normally reaching Visakhapatnam within 5 to 6 hours. Moreover, the authorities give preference to the goods train over the passenger-cum-goods train. That is the reason why the people do not want to travel by this passenger-cum-goods train and they prefer to travel by road. It is therefore necessary to widen and maintain this national highway passing through this area. Apart from this, a

[Sh. K. Pradhani]

large number of small and big industries and multi-purpose projects have also been started in that area and the traffic on this road has therefore become very heavy. And this is a single line highway with only the central portion black topped and the other 2/3rds of it remain mud road. During the rainy season lot of accidents take place due to the mud and slipping of the vehicles. I have been urging repeatedly to widen this road, but the work is very slow. Sir, the most important part of the road is the ghat road which passes through the Eastern Ghats, and the big trailers carrying the heavy machines for the hydel and power projects get stranded in this hilly area and the whole traffic is jammed. For days together they cannot be replaced or removed. So, Sir, with the importance of this road, I think the Government of India will take some immediate steps to widen this ghat by giving priority. Most of the portion of this ghat road falls in Andhra Pradesh, but they do not attach much importance to this because they do not have so much of necessity to attach importance there, but our Orissa people have to depend on this road to go to the State Headquarters and also to the railway line on the coastal belt.

In addition to this, I have got some general suggestions for these National Highways. National Highways being the very important roads just like the arteries and veins of human beings, I request the hon. Minister to take up some more important roads having inter State connection and take up the construction and maintenance of those roads as early as possible.

Secondly, some State Governments have applied for loans to improve the roads in existence to have inter-district or to improve the roads in existence to have inter-district or inter-State connection. I think some proposals are pending with the Government of India. One of them is Umerkote to Jagdalpur via Singsari and another is Umerkote to Chanda Handi to Madhya Pradesh and so many other roads for which I do not have the list. I request the hon. Minister to take up the scheme and allot

money early so that these roads can be taken up earlier.

The third thing is that our Government and our Department have proposed to start some road-side amenities for the passengers on these roads. This is a very good idea. For hundreds of miles or kilometres we do not have any shelter when the accidents occur and when there is some disorder of the vehicles, the passenger get lot of troubles in the hills without food or shelter or drinking water. So, the telephones and spare part for repairs etc. should be available at regular intervals. These amenities should be provided at certain intervals of locations in consultation with the State Government.

Lastly, Sir, I would like to submit that the consultation of the State Government is quite necessary when planning and widening of roads take place. When the question of land comes, the State Government automatically comes into the picture and when the planning also comes, as my previous speaker said, though they have their own angle at least let us consult them and have their views in mind to plan out new proposals, and acquisition of land is compulsory to widen the roads and solve the problem. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to consider my proposals favourably and take necessary steps for the improvement of the National Highways.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN (Barpeta): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I take my stand to welcome this Bill though I belong to the Opposition. It is a very laudable move on the part of the Ministry of Surface Transport and it has come a bit too late. It should have been there much earlier. Let it be a kind of super PWD run by the central Government. I would certainly compliment the people who have drafted this Bill. They have really looked into different aspects of the whole matter of national transport. But there are various other considerations which have been left out. For example, the people from the Northeastern part of the country, from which I come, feel segregated, feel isolated. We want a network of national highway which will bring us

closer to the mainstream of national life. Assam and the Northeastern region have peculiar problems of their own. Without the cooperation of these regions, without the cooperation of the seven States, the Government of India cannot get the things done and it would be difficult to achieve the purpose. Therefore, although it is a national scheme, it should have regional weightage. You must take care of the regional sentiments. That is why, I would suggest, as my friend preceding me has said that we should have a consultative committee for each region and Northeast must have a consultative committee, whose advice would be taken care of by the Ministry. We have a very peculiar position. We have only one entry point and one exit point going to Assam. Railways are not good enough for us. You will be surprised to know that every day thousands of trucks are entering the Northeast and thousands of trucks over coming out. So, ordinary national highway will not serve us adequately or the way it is intended. I can only visualise that for the whole of the country, we should have dual carriageways with fly-overs over the railway crossing and long fly-overs over road inter-sections so that one does not clash with the other. Let it be planned now so that at least my grandson, grand daughter or grandsons and grand daughters of the present generation will see that sort of a horizon in the next 50 to 100 years to come.

We have other peculiarities of our own. The whole of Northeastern region has bad road. Every year, 4 times a year, the road goes under water. Time will come when you have to raise the level of national highway or find out new alignments along the foothills of the Northeast. For example, new roads can be built along the the foothills of Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh, entering Assam also. In addition, what is seen at present? There is only one highway and it gets completely knocked out during the rains and even troops movement is not possible. We have a very sensitive area and there are people who are not very friendly with us from across the border.

Therefore, we would have a rapid movement transport plan. I would suggest that one such highway could be linking of Abhayapuri with Barpeta. A road is already existing from Barpeta to Gauhati in Assam. But this little bit of gap should be filled up as quickly as possible to have an important alternative highway.

As regards the functioning of the Authority Chapter V Clause (d) envisages regulation and control of vehicles on the national highway and proper management. The national highway, when it comes, will have to be properly policed. All along the national highway, we should have police force for highway patrolling with their own modern equipments like wireless and ambulances, patrol cars and for every two or three miles or seven miles, we should have a police kiosks where people can go and complain about the troubles they face. Particularly night journey should be made safe. When precautions are taken for night journey, day journey will be automatically safe for travel.

Another aspect I would like to touch upon is the collection of funds. The present method of fund collection through the District Transport Authority is not good enough. There are holes in the bucket through which valuable revenue leaks out.

Therefore, I would suggest that on the national highways, we should have a system of issuing national permit where the tax will be collected at different points in different States and that tax, once collected, should not be doubly taxed by the States. The vehicles which pay taxes on the national highway should not be doubly taxed again by the State Government. This will give a good fund to the National Transport Authority.

Funds will be a constraint but we can certainly approach the World Bank, the IDB and get loans from open market also from the other countries, if necessary.

But, as I have pointed out, the provision of having dual carriageways on national highways running crossing the country should be

[Sh. Ataur Rahman]

taken up very seriously and I have great hope that Shri Rajesh Pilotji who has dynamism in him would take us to the 21st century faster.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHD. AYUB KHAN (Jhunjhunu): Mr. hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I whole-heartedly support the National Highways Authority Bill brought forward by our dynamic Minister Shri Rajesh Pilot. Along with this, I hope that he will be able to accomplish the work for the welfare of the country.

15.00 hrs.

There is a need to provide some roadside amenities along our national highways, particularly after a distance of every 100 K.M., basic amenities should be made available. For example, facilities of telephone, proper refreshments, bathroom and medical aid, etc. should be available after every 100 K.M. as also casualty evacuation arrangement and spare parts facilities are also required to be provided. There should be inter-connection from one point to the other points so that the recovery relief can be sent immediately in case of accidents and needy could be provided help. If need be, a net work of communication system should be created on the pattern of Railways. A squad remains mobile to check the defects developed in railway lines and it ensures their maintenance. Similar arrangements should be made for national highways, arrangements should be made for checking of roads though a mobile squad which should remain vigilant to rectify defects in roads. In order to ensure proper use of materials in required quantities a full proof formula is required to be formulated. I suggest that this can be accomplished easily with the help of Border Security Force and their help can be sought. So far as corruption in this department is concerned, it must be checked. You travelled in buses to have a first hand information about the difficulties of bus commuters. Similarly, I hope that necessary steps will be

taken under your leadership to check corruption among road contractors, Executive Engineers and other staff.

15.01 hrs.

[SHRI N. VENKATA RATNAM *in the Chair*]

Construction of roads in large number is a good device to strengthen and develop the country. In order to maintain the speed of the vehicles plying on our national highways and provide safety and security to the equipments and tyres etc. for efficient and smooth plying of vehicles, only one way traffic should be allowed on those roads. If roads are divided into two parts by raising partition in the middle, it will definitely decrease the number of accidents. For example, there is heavy traffic on Delhi Jaipur and Jaipur-Ajmer high ways. The Hon. Minister has himself declared that these highways will be widened and partition will be raised in the middle. I hope that the hon. Minister will taken necessary steps in pursuance of his promise.

The Government pays attention to improve the condition of the labourers. I want that the Government should pay attention to improve the lot of truck drivers also. Truck drivers are badly exploited at present. They have to drive trucks day and night and this is the reason why they resort to alcoholic drink. I would like to submit that you should not allow any drivers to drive vehicles in the night between 0 hours and 5 hours so that the drivers can have rest at night and drive their trucks properly in the day time. In addition, there should be a restriction on speed of heavy vehicles which should be fixed keeping in view the state of their engines and such arrangements should be made that no body violates that limit.

Now I will like to draw your attention to my own state Rajasthan which is a backward area. I am happy that our Hon. Minister belongs to Rajasthan and the incharge of this Department is also connected with Rajasthan. The hon. Minister has paid a visit to

khetri with me and he had himself seen the deplorable condition of the roads there. During his tour, the hon. Minister had promised to get the construction of some roads started such as Bombay to Madhogarh, Sefragwar to Hardia, Bombay to Hardia, one road upto Nolpur and from Sihana to Tatija. He had given assurance to build roads in Navalgarh area from Chirana to Todpur. All these roads are connecting roads to the highways. I hope that construction work will be started as per your instructions.

The second thing is that Sekhavati area which includes Sikar and Jhunjhnu areas should be linked with the national high way via Seeker Jhunjhunu and Jhunjhunu Delhi. These highway are not very long. These roads which passes through seeker, Navalgarh, Jhunjhunu, Chairawa, Singhana and Narnole can be linked with Jaipur-Delhi National highway at Rewari. I hope that the work to connect Jhunjhunu road with the national highway will be done under the leadership of the Hon. Minister. The roads mentioned by me are short roads and hon. Minister may like to pay attention to them. After connecting them, national highways and state highways can be utilised in better way as also free flow of traffic will be ensured. Bathing facilities should also be made available to the drivers in the roadside hotels and 'Dhabas'. Dirty water and dirty foods are supplied to them at present. Such exploitation can be checked if some control is exercised. Particularly, it is essential for the heavy vehicles to stop after every 100 K.M., similarly if these can be kept under control, the work will be very easy. Similarly tax on the trucks and the other vehicles running on the roads should be levied only once. It will check corruption. The people who indulge in corruption by stopping the trucks should be checked from doing this. There should be facilities to grant permit from your side. I have every confidence that the roads will be widened under your leadership in the area adjacent to Pakistan. There is a road from Bikanar to Suratgarh and Suratgarh to Sardar city which is mostly used for Defence purposes. This road should be widened for free flow of Army from one place to another.

In the end, I support the Bill whole heartedly and I hope that the condition of national highways will definitely improve under the leadership of hon. Minister.

[English]

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Panaji): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I stand here to support the Bill moved by the Hon. Minister. In fact, I think, this is one of the very good legislations which have been introduced in the current session. The only thing is that, this is only one aspect of the national highway as such. Even in the past, I have suggested that whenever one deals with one aspect of a legislation, normally such aspect should be included by way of amendment to the main Act.

For example, they have got the National Highway Act, 1956. Now in case we propose to create an authority such as National Highway Authority we should have done it by way of amendment to the National Highway Act instead of enacting a separate legislation. What I am proposing is that instead of an independent legislation only for the purpose of authority, we should have amended the main Act as the National Highway (Amendment) Act and incorporated the chapter for this purpose, because that consolidates the position. I have submitted this in the other case also. Suppose, there is a layman who wants to know something about the national highway. He goes to a book-stall and purchases the National Highway Act 1956 because that is the main legislation. But there he will not find anything about the national highway authority. Subsequently, he may come to know that there is an independent law known as the National Highway Authority Act. This aspect should be considered whenever we enact legislation. Not that you draft. Draftsmen are there. But they must realise this aspect and incorporate chapters in the main Act so that the entire law is available at one place.

We normally encourage delegation of any authority. We encourage delegation of authority because power should decentral-

[Sh. Shantaram Naik] ise. But here is an instance where somehow our experience with respect to delegation of authority was bad viz., the Government of India delegated its authority with respect to national highways to the state governments and the result was very bad. Because State Governments did not look after the national highways, did not look after the maintenance, did not care to punish or question those officers and engineers who neglected national highways; because this is the responsibility of the Central Government, they did not bother about anything. As a result of this, we have to cancel the delegation of authority and create this legislation and appoint an independent authority

Therefore in a limited sense this is some sort of a set back that we have got in the line of delegation of authority. Otherwise in principle, always delegation of authority is welcome. Here we are now cancelling the power of delegation of authority; we are abolishing the agency system and creating a legislation which is good and welcome. This is an aspect which is unfortunately true that in respect of delegation of authority that we had given to the State Governments, they did not fulfil their duty. Therefore we are cancelling the delegation of authority, cancelling the agency system and enacting this law.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Sir, a clarification. The idea is certainly not to cancel the delegation of powers to a State Government. It is just creating another avenue to have a competition, to have a better quality of work on the national highway. That is the main intention. We have no intention to take away any power from the State Governments which are delegated earlier; at this juncture what we are discussing is to have another avenue which is called National Highway Authority to monitor the quality of work in the States on the national highways. No misunderstanding should be there that the Government had delegated power earlier and now it is taking back. Earlier also the work given to them was on the agency basis for

which we were paying to them. Now we realised that the agency basis of work has not worked very well in some States. I am still accepting that not all the States have done bad. Some of the States have done a good job and they are doing a good job. This is opening another avenue to have a better competition to get the best result of the exchequer's money.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: In your Objects and Reasons 5(b), you are taking away the agency system that you have delegated to the States.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are getting your own chance Mr. Pradhan.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: Now that we have created this authority, we should have a very efficient and beautiful network of the various offices in all the States. Because you will be establishing this authority to manage national highways throughout the length and breadth of the country involving thousands of kilometres. Therefore we should have a good machinery, good network of offices and we should have responsible engineers and officers to manage these national highways.

Here in this particular case, since we will be managing things from Delhi, there should be no lack of will or power from our side to look after or to supervise all the functions of these authorities at lower level or subordinate offices which are managing the national highways. So we should have a constant watch.

The more important aspect is with respect to quality control of national highways which we are to maintain and construct further. Whether it is a State Highway or a National Highway, when a highway is constructed if it does not conform to the quality which is prescribed, then the whole problem arises. Supposing we establish a highway or prepare a highway of 100 kilometres, if it does not conform to the specifications which are there in the manuals with respect to national highways, then within a period of

five years or even after one onset of monsoon in monsoon areas the highways will be washed away, and crores of rupees spent—at least a half of it—will be wasted. So the Highway Authority should stress on these aspects to see that they shall maintain the quality at all costs and no work will be sanctioned or no work will be approved unless strict quality measures are taken. Once we maintain quality control then for twenty years we need not bother about the national highways. Only some maintenance may be required. If we do not have quality control then every year the maintenance cost will be huge and crores of rupees will get wasted.

Recently there were heavy monsoons in Goa. There were pot-holes on the entire national highway. For months together those pot-holes were not filled. Administration was not at fault as the monsoon rains were continuing. If they had undertaken the repairs the next day there may again have been pot-holes as quality control had not been insisted upon in the beginning. One citizen from Goa filed a writ petition before the Panji Bench and the court instructed the Government to fill the pot-holes within a number of specified days. Government would have filled those pot-holes but court gave instructions asking them to fill the pot-holes without going into the budget aspect and also the fact that Government proposed to fill the pot-holes shortly.

Secondly the deeming of certain State highways as National Highways for years together result in their being kept in the same stage. They are only considered as a national highway for legal formalities. If there are cases where State highways are deemed as National highways and they do not form to specifications then it should be seen that they are made national highways as quickly as possible.

Sir, as far as advertisements on the national highways are concerned, rules should be framed as to what sort of advertisements are to be allowed and at what sort of advertisements are to be allowed and at what distance. These advertisements catch

the attention of the drivers which sometimes result into accidents. So on highways we should have strict code of displaying advertisements. Now I would like to refer to a point which has been earlier raised also. In case of lack of funds we may approach the World Bank with respect to loans for construction of new highways. Government of Maharashtra recently took loans with respect to State highways. From whatever source we can obtain funds for the purpose of maintaining and constructing the national highways we should try to get the funds.

Sir, I would also like to draw your attention to Clause 31. This clause provides for divesting of powers which are vested in the authority. Whatever may be the object I have not been able to follow. Once we are creating an authority I would like to know what conditions do you visualise under Clause 31 in which case you may have to divest the power which has been once vested in the National Highways Authority. Please clarify for what purpose this provisions has been included? Do you have some other specific authority in mind in which you want to vest the power to maintain the national highways? If so, what is that authority? Is it the one constructing our border roads? Please clarify this aspect also.

Lastly I would like to submit now that in most places we have not been able to have network of railways especially in the Eastern sector... Similarly, in Goa also, we don't have a direct broad-gauge line up to Goa. Therefore, as far as Goa is concerned, for maintenance and construction of national highways, priority should be given to those areas where broad-gauge railway lines are not set up or are not likely to be set up in the near future. If we don't have broad-gauge lines or properly maintained national highways, then transportation suffers, flow of people suffers and everything suffers. That's all.

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI (Srinagar): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I stand up to support the Bill. I feel this has great relevance for Jammu and Kashmir State and other hilly States. In the present-day context

[Sh. Abdul Rashid Kabuli]
of development, it is unfortunate that still the Himalayan States, North-Eastern States and in the north, especially Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh western Uttar Pradesh are suffering because of not having good roads. In all these States, road is a lifeline. It is also important from the Defence point of view. On the northern side, this is the problem while on the south, we have sea.

I am hopeful and I believe that the dynamic Minister, as Mr. Rajesh Pilot is, is going to do justice to the Bill and it will not be only on the statute book but it will also be made practicable and implemented in letter and spirit.

This is also important because in the northern States, especially in Jammu and Kashmir, we have minerals, fruits forests, etc. The exploitation of these natural resources is not possible without having good roads because we have no railways. Even for air traffic, we have difficulties. The Government knows it for certain. But as far as roads are concerned, not having good roads means that Kashmir cannot export fruit in proper time. It has happened always that fruit worth crores of rupees has been spoiled in the valley because we could not export it in time. Again, the forest produce has no outlet except that we have to export it through national highway. Same is the condition of our industrial growth, say, our carpets, handicrafts. In the development of handicrafts and for our small scale industries, again road is important. This is our experience and Mr. Pilot knows. You know many things about the State and its socio-economic conditions. He has widely travelled in our State and has been very much closely associated with the affairs of Kashmir. He must be knowing that the Banihal road is giving us tragedies. This Srinagar-Jammu highway is an important and the only outlet for the valley and Ladakh. It is also the main source of communication. We feel topographically and as far as experts' opinion is concerned—that it has lived its life. In the previous years, we would see landslides at Nashri or one or two other places. Now the

entire belt has suffered and at least in not less than 20 places every year during winter and sometimes even in summer, there are landslides. Road-blockades take place and the communication is disrupted. Therefore, the provisions which are coming to States the things which we are exporting do not come and do not reach the market at Delhi. Therefore, it has become a question of life and death for Kashmir. I can assure you, Sir, that four million people are living on this sole highway. God forbid, if this Srinagar-Jammu road collapses or something else happens to it, does it mean that the entire relationship with the States will come to an end? There will be complete chaos and confusion. I am sorry to say, the Government of India never bothered about this thing. It should have been taken seriously from 1947 onwards. It is because before 1947—the hon. Minister knows about it—there was only one Highway, Rawalpindi Road, which was connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country. At that time, India and Pakistan were one. It was running all the year round. It will take only 10-12 hours by bus from Srinagar to reach Rawalpindi. At that time export of fruit, handicrafts and carpets from Kashmir were made through that road. But I must tell you, now there are forces which/are raising their finger towards the Centre as to why the Centre is not bothered about this road although we were in a good position in 1947 when Rawalpindi was the only road connecting the rest of the country with Kashmir State. Did we ever care for our substitute road which was then called Banihal Cart road? It had never been a road. The Maharaja had constructed this road only for making Jammu, the Winter Capital and Srinagar the Summer Capital in order to have proper communication.

In the Banihal Cart road, only Carts were running. Since independence, the Government didn't bother to take care of this road. There is no doubt that Beacon did a stupendous job in repairing the road. But there should have been a substitute road also. I remember when I was in the State Assembly as early as in 1972 when Syed Mir Qasim was our Chief Minister, I used to

raised this problem as to what will happen to Kashmir. At that time Qasim *Sahib* used to tell us that Congress is ruling the State and we are suffering from this problem because there is some misunderstanding with the Armed Forces or the Defence Ministry. But later on, he succeeded in getting the clearance from the Defence Ministry. After 1972—now it is 1988— the hon. Minister at least should now understand as to how Kashmiri people are facing the miseries. Imagine, if there is a blockade of road for ten days, what will be their condition? People of Ladakh and other region—about 4 million people—will have to travel in a very dangerous condition. It means a sort of death Knell for those people. It creates so much chaos and confusion. Hoarders exploit people. People don't get rations. They don't get foodgrains. They don't get mutton, milk and other things which generally come from the other parts of the country to the State of Kashmir. Unfortunately our economic position is not good. At the moment, we are mostly importing things. Even edible oil we are importing. If this road collapses, what will happen. Only two months back there was a road blockade. Even petrol was not available. There was a complete chaos. and life came to a standstill. This was the tragedy with the Kashmiris. This question was raised by us many times. I tell you honestly, how people speak about Kashmir's accession with India. We have for certain principles acceded with India—a great country.

We were made part of India. But was it not the responsibility of the Central Government to give us a substitute and a viable road instead of Rawalpindi so that the people can forget Rawalpindi? This is one thing. This is very important. I am sure the Minister will take note of this thing. We had a substitute road during Moghal times which is called Moghal road. It was a communication line between Kashmir with the rest of the country. That road can be developed. I have told our Chief Minister recently and he had appreciated the gesture of goodwill from the hon. Minister that you are going to build *bandhs*. In the newspapers, it has appeared that you are going to finance only 50 per

cent. I do not agree with with it. If the newspaper report is correct, then I differ with you. We have no resources. Kashmir is a poor State. We cannot afford it. Therefore, you have to take up this matter solely and you have to give more financial aid to my State. You should share the fullest responsibility for the completion of this road.

It should not take year; rather it should takes months. It is a big challenge to the Minister, to the government; it must be completed with 6-8 months at the most. You know in Kashmir there is no rail and no other communication. What about the Doda District? The hon. Minister might have gone a number of time to that side. In a far lung area from there, there are beautiful valleys called Badarai and Kishtai; they have remained unexplored. If they would have been developed, they can be most beautiful places for the tourists attraction; but that road is so horrible that while you go from Ramban to Bhadararwah, everybody on the way thinks that he is in the hand of God; whether he will be able to reach his destination or not only God knows. You know that every year hundreds of people are killed. Recently, during the last 2-3 months, we had three accidents in which all the passengers who were travelling in the buses were killed. It is a very difficult area for the buses to ply over there. More than six lakh people are living in that district; it has a very strategic importance because on the other side of the Doda District, the China border is touching that area; that road should also be taken up by the National Highways Authority and it should be made a National Highway. Besides, there are many other roads. A very important thing is the linking of that valley with Ladakh. Regarding that, I would suggest that Baltal which connects Ladakh with Kashmir, there should be a tunnel which can be much helpful. If the hon. Minister has read today's newspaper, he must be knowing that Ladakh is also now suffering because of communication lines being disrupted; there is no bus; no truck can take foodgrains and other stock to Ladakh; and for about 6-8 months, people will have to suffer in Zanskar, in Ladakh and in Kargil. Therefore, you kindly

[Sh. Abdul Rashid Kabuli] look into that aspect also. This is our demand that we need a tunnel at Baltal which connects Ladakh with the valley.

PROF. N.G. RANGA (GUNTUR): How Long?

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI: It will be 5-6 kms. But it will be very important; it will be a life-line; it can make that road viable for the traffic. Besides, there are other roads also. You know that Tandra is encircled by the ceasefire line and there is a necessity for the road. Our defence forces are there.

We have appreciated this Bill and every member has stood in support of this Bill. This is really a great thing which the government has done. But it should be implemented and the priority should be fixed. You know that Kashmir has no rail and other communication line. Therefore, top priority should be given to Kashmir road, Himachal Pradesh and then to other, because they are also hilly areas.

There should be technical know-how. There has been corruption in the business of roads building because the petty contractors are betraying the people over there. I would appreciate if the Government of India makes it a point to make available the technical know-how to the State. You cannot trespass their right, but since you are getting this authority, you must utilise it for the better of these National Highways. This activity should not be left to those petty contractors who are squeezing money and betraying the nation and spoiling everything.

Besides, regarding traffic system, these traffic Inspectors and Officers are also making money; they are not serving the Traffic Department. This is our personal experience. Whenever you post these Inspectors of Traffic at any point, they are making money. Therefore, some viable arrangement must be made by you.

When people die due to accidents, there is no immediate relief available for

them. For instance, there should have been a hospital nearby when these people can be taken immediately for treatment if something happens in Khooninallah and Ramban. Now, we have to air lift them to Jammu, Chandigarh and other places. Why so? Why not at Ramban, Banihal or Kajigund? The same thing should be operated in other parts of the country. Because while you take those dead bodies or the injured persons to those places, they do not reach the destinations. They die, they perish on the way. Therefore, these things should also be considered. This is very important. Because, the Northern States are having tourist oriented economy and unfortunately it is those people who suffer. They do not find anything except the Dabas where adulterated food is supplied. Regarding that aspect also you should discuss with the State Governments. All these things should also be looked into. These are my suggestions.

I hope that the hon. Minister will come up with some firm commitment to the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI PRABHAWATI GUPTA (Motihari): I rise to welcome and support the National Highway Authority Bill. I think that the intention behind bringing this Bill is welfare of the people and which is very necessary in the present day situation. By keeping in view the constraints of time, I would like to put forward some suggestions in this regard.

There can be no two opinions on the point that considerable work has been undertaken since independence in the direction of the improvement of roads which were in a deplorable condition. Road transport has enormous significance in our country because laying of Railways lines is very expensive and in view of resource constraints, Priority should be accorded to roads. It is in this sequence that the proposed legislation has been brought.

In my opinion, all national highways

should be brought under Central control. It will result in their proper maintenance and this work should be assigned to the National Highways Authority. While constituting the National Highways Authority, preference should be given to the technical personnel, as it would be an Authority doing technical job. States should also get their due representation on its Board.

During the last 4 decades, about 1.25 lakhs of road accidents have occurred in our country. Nearly 35 to 36 thousand people die premature death in these accidents occurring every year. I would suggest that the responsibility of minimising road accidents should also be entrusted with this authority so that proper maintenance of all the national highways of the country could be done by it. In this context, I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that the system of issuing driving licences of vehicles is faulty and it requires improvement. In this connection, the Motor Vehicles Act is already there but issuing of licences does not come under the jurisdiction of the Central Government as it is a State subject. Most of the road-accidents are man-made and therefore, I want to request you to ensure strict compliance of the provisions of Motor Vehicles Act. In this connection, the hon. Minister should direct all the State Governments to take necessary steps for minimising road-accidents. I read in today's newspaper itself that a bus fell into a khud in Madhubani district which is a border district. The main reason behind this accident was that the bridge through which this bus was passing was in a very poor condition. That is why I want to draw your attention, especially towards all the bridges in the country which are in a deplorable state so that concrete steps are taken to improve them. Most of the bridges have outlived their life span whereas the load of traffic is increasing day by day. Therefore, bridges are required to be strengthened and repaired immediately. I hail from Bihar and Bihar is one of those fortunate State where several national highways were constructed after independence. Earlier the project under which these highways were constructed was called the Na-

tional Roads project and subsequently, the name was changed to National Highways. Two national highways i.e. Highways Nos. 28 and 28-A pass through my constituency. One of them passes through Muzaffarpur and Kasiyali via Piprakothi and another passes through Muzaffarpur to Raksaul. The condition of both these highways is quite deplorable. Government has provided about Rs. 2 crores for making improvement but still ditches are found everywhere on the roads. Materials used in construction of these roads are so sub standard that with the very appearance, it does not give a look befitting to a national highway. I will request you to send a Central Inspection team there to make an enquiry as to whether the funds given for the purpose of improvement of highways are being utilised. An amount of Rs. 1250 crores has been allocated under the current plan for this purpose for the country as a whole and which I think is very inadequate. I would request the hon. Minister that his Ministry should put demands for more funds to the Planning Commission so that the proposed Authority may get more funds for the schemes. In addition to the work of maintenance, National Highways Authority should undertake the constructions of new national highways. The Commission on National Waterways policy reviewed the demands for the construction of 37 highways. I want to know as to how many highways have been taken up for construction and how many such roads are located in Bihar?

Just now a Member from Jammu and Kashmir was speaking. He drew the attention of the House especially towards corruption. The roads are in a deplorable condition. I would submit that if even 50 to 55 per cent of the total allocations are spent on actual construction of roads, their condition can make much improvement. The condition of the National as well as the State highways is very poor in Bihar. Out of the proposed 37 highways to be constructed, I want to request you to convert the Patna-Muzaffarpur state highway into a National highway. Patna-Arrah road is also equally important. It should also be converted into a national

[Smt. Prabhawati Gupta]
highway. Similarly, the national highway number 28-A which runs between Muzafarpur and Raksaul should be given special attention. This road is very important from the strategic point of view because Raksaul is the last Indian point thereafter territory of Nepal starts. Thus, this road enjoys international significance. But the condition of that road is very poor. Hon. Shri Pilot is requested to pay a visit to that area to see the state of that road. One cannot even walk properly on it. Immediately after crossing Uttar Pradesh border and entering into the territory of Bihar at Sasaram, one could see the deplorable condition of these roads. Therefore, attention should be paid in that direction.

I want to offer yet another special suggestion. All forest areas and inaccessible and hilly areas should be linked with national highways. In many of the State capitals of the North-Eastern region, railways facilities are not available. Those areas should also be linked with national highways. Similarly areas not having broadgauge lines should be connected with national highways.

Another important aspect is that of research and development. There is an organisation for this purpose under the Ministry of Surface Transport but it will not do. You should decentralise the Research activities in the country. Research laboratories should be set up at the regional and the district level. There is one more request to you. National Vigilance Committees under the control of the proposed Authority should be set up at the district, regional and the divisional levels to keep watch on the quality of roads. The safety and security on roads is of utmost importance. Now-a-days, people are robbed not only during night but also in broad daylight. You should run good condition buses on the roads and provide protection to the passengers. If protection is not provided, road transport will lose its importance and utility of the Authority will also be nullified.

I want to offer another suggestion. The condition of G. T. road which was converted

into national highway and which runs upto Guwahati is not good. National Highway No. 31 passing through Mansi, Khagaria, Purnia, Kishanganj is in a very poor condition. This road is always ravaged by furious floods and the whole area is a flood-prone area. The national highway gets damaged as a result of which people have to face severe difficulties. Government should pay attention to this.

One point which I want to mention is that Government should set up a Finance Corporation under the National Highway Authority on the pattern of one obtaining in the Railways. It should issue bonds to raise funds because funds are in short supply as compared to its demand. It is difficult to lay more railway lines because it involves a lot of expenditure and the Government does not have sufficient funds for it. Apart from that, construction of railway tracks takes considerable time. As extension of railway facilities to an area brings prosperity for it so, are the national highways. Priority should be given to the construction of railway lines.

With these words, I want to submit that attention should be paid to the suggestions which I have made and sub-standard roads should not be constructed. Whatever constructions are undertaken, they should be of a good quality. Today the condition of national highways is not good. They should be at par with the national highways of foreign countries. Though the Delhi-Jaipur-Ajmer national highway conforms to the required standard but still they are not at par with the standard of their counterparts in foreign countries. The quality of the highways should be improved. Finally, I welcome this National Highways Authority Bill and hope that this work will make good progress under your dynamic and progressive leadership and the country will make progress.

SHRI MANOJ PANDEY (Betah): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the National Highways Authority Bill.

Sir, as such the rail-road system should be considered here in all its totality but this is

a very important issue and we all congratulate the hon. Minister for having brought this proposal of constituting the National highways Authority, while this matter was discussed with us earlier, and that dream of all of us is being fulfilled today. As it is, the Railways is under considerable pressure and we all pressurise the hon. Minister of Railways for developing railways in our respective constituencies and we also persuade the Hon. Prime Minister sometimes in this regard. But everyone is aware that the number of people travelling by National or State highways is many times more than the people travelling by Railways. The condition of Railways is not very good and it is stated again and again that Railways does not have sufficient resources for constituency wise development but if roads can be developed as much as railways or at least it is developed along with it, then arrangements should be made to release funds from the Planning Commission for this purpose. It is most unfortunate that roads are not available in many rural areas, particularly rural areas in my State. I have also seen that there are many places where roads are not available but railways have reached. There are many revote areas where roads are absent but railway tracks have been laid. I think it is essential to ensure that roads are constructed by the Central or the State Government in those remote areas where railway facilities are already available.

I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister especially to 2-3 points. I want to draw his attention towards those bridges which serve as a link between the two adjoining States. There are some highways which end near the river but in the absence of a bridge on the river that area of a State remains cut off from another State. I want to draw his attention to the most backward area. There is a need to construct a bridge on Gandak river which connects eastern Uttar Pradesh and northern Bihar.

The Bagha-Chatauni rail bridge has been referred to here. If the Government is unable to get this bridge constructed during the Seventh Five Year Plan, then my sub-

mission is that the Government should at least make a provision for a road bridge between Bagha and Chatauni. The estimates of the survey conducted by the Bihar Government has also been sent to you. My submission is that arrangement for the construction of this bridge should be made so that Nepal and Northern Bihar may be linked. This is an important issue from the point of view of defence also.

Secondly, what happens about the national highways is that the State Governments normally write about certain roads to the Centre which are then approved as national highways by the Centre. This is good because our Constitution provides for a federal structure and the Central Government should enjoy this power. We all respect this. But in this certain points are left which are important at national level since the State Governments pay attention to roads from their own point of view. It is possible that the State Governments also avoid roads which are important in the national perspective. Therefore my submission is that whenever we talk of national highways we should have a national perspective instead of regional concerning with the state only. At least on priority basis there should be some such distribution that 50 per cent of the outlay should be kept for national highways and 50 per cent for the state highways. If we follow this strategy, then alone, I feel, it can be termed national concept otherwise it will have different meaning. I simply mean to say that we should have a national perspective regarding the national highways.

Another significant point is regarding the construction of roads in the areas hit by natural calamities. As Shri Kabuli from Kashmir also stated, heavy losses are incurred every year due to natural calamities. When a road is dilapidated and it is not repaired early then huge expenditure is needed for its repair or reconstruction. A provision for separate fund should be made for this purpose. A provision for separate funds in the National Highway Authority should be made for the maintenance and repair of roads at places where there are floods or land slides,

[Sh. Manoj Pandey]
so that the roads may be repaired in time and may remain in good condition. There will be no traffic blockade then, which causes an adverse impact on every State.

A huge area in North Bihar is affected by floods. There are several rivers flowing in the area adjacent to Nepal. This area is struck by floods every year. Just as the hon. Member Shrimati Prabhawati Gupta has also stated there accumulates on National Highway No. 28 and 28 A water 3 to 4 feet deep due to floods every year and the roads get washed away. Due to this we are unable to even visit our Constituency because it is totally cut off from other areas. My submission is that the Government should certainly pay attention to National Highways 28 and 28 A because it joins the capital of North Bihar, Muzaffarpur with Mathmandu and when the traffic moving for Kathmandu reaches there, it gets difficult for it to go beyond Muzaffarpur and passengers have to return from there. This has happened many a times. Recently a High Commissioner of Cyprus had gone there and he had to return due to the bad condition of roads. Tourists visiting there have also to return because of the same reason. I would like the hon. Minister to pay attention in this regard and arrange funds for the purpose so that the road maintenance work may be undertaken properly every year. This is good that the Government has taken back the agency system from the construction work of the roads and the work will now be undertaken by the Government itself. Till now the State Government used to send estimates and the Central Government sanctioned funds. After this the State Government used to function as an agency and also used to get funds for maintenance from the Central Government. Now the position is that the function of the agency will be performed by this Authority and the roads will be constructed under the supervision of the Authority engineers and all the works will be undertaken as per the specification of national highways.

Smt. Prabhawati made a very good point that an Advisory-Committee should be

formed. My own suggestion is that there should be an Advisory Committee at district level and regional level so that they may place the problems of those places. The Members of Parliament and M.L.As etc. should be nominated on these committees.

There are certain roads which are very busy. I would like to mention about them. Road No. 28, a highway from Motihari to Chapua should be strengthened and its width should at least be doubled. On this road, trucks and lorries ply upto Rakhsaul and Kathmandu but it is washed away every year. Therefore, attention is needed in this direction. Similarly there is a single lane road between Chapua and Balmiki Nagar, the last station of India and is being used as a national highway. The work of strengthening and widening the road has been undertaken from Chapua to Betia but it is a state highway from Betia to Bagha. This is a very important link road and you all know that the *Ashoka Stambh* is situated near Loria. We had visited Puri recently, the Estimates Committee had also a visit to this area. Buddhist culture is there in the entire area and we are required to maintain it. Therefore there should be a national highway from Chadua to Balmiki Nagar. The State Government, after approving it has sent it to the Central Government and my submission to the hon. Minister is that it should be approved as national highway by next year.

16.00 hrs.

I would like to submit another important point about the railway fly over. Many other hon. Members have drawn attention to the fact that there is heavy railway traffic at some places on the national highway. In my own constituency which falls on the main route, there is heavy railway traffic at least at three places. Whenever the subject of fly over is discussed, funds are demanded from the State Governments. This fly over can be constructed only after the State Government agrees to financial contribution. Railway Ministry may grant funds only after that. How far is it proper to demand funds from the State Governments for the construction of

flyover on a national highway? I feel that the construction of all the national highways or the work of connecting one national highway with another should be undertaken by the National Highway Authority. There are two such flyovers in my constituency. One is near Sugauli and another near Raksaul. The Raksaul national highway should be linked with the by-pass road and a flyover should be constructed on it upto Beerganj, which falls in Nepal. Attention should certainly be paid on the need for flyover and by-pass road. The State Government has already sent a proposal in this regard. I would like to thank the hon. Minister for introducing an excellent Bill regarding National Highways.

[English]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support this National Highways Authority of India Bill, 1988, to the extent that it enables this Authority to receive the loans, great bonds debentures etc., to receive the much needed finances.

Sir, you are aware that the World Bank has commented in the Roads Congress that the condition of the Indian roads is the worst when compared to several road conditions in the world. Sir, the Additional Director General of Roads has estimated that nearly Rs. 6000 crores are needed to bring the present National Highways network to the required standard. So, in this background, certainly the setting up of National Highways Authority will help to some extent to receive the funds which are very very needed for the development and maintenance of the National Highways.

Sir, I do not agree with the views expressed by the hon. Minister regarding the functioning of the agency system and the difficulties experienced, which he has narrated. But I would like to say that the fault does not lie with the agency system as such, but it is our inadequate supply of funds to the State Government to maintain and develop the National Highways. Here I would like to quote a few examples. For example, the

renewals part. In a six-year cycle we have to renew all the National Highways. For example, when we take our State of Andhra Pradesh, we have to renew nearly 400 kilometres National Highways road length every year. While nearly Rs 2.5 lakhs are needed for renewal of one kilometre, actually our State requires nearly Rs 10 to 12 crores. But the Central Government is giving only Rs. 4 crores, that is about one-third of the amount that is required to renew these National Highways. With this meagre amount, how can we expect the State Government to renew the road length which is expected to be renewed every year? Similarly, Sir, in respect of maintenance of the National Highways, the National Highways Departments in the respective States submit some proposals for the maintenance of roads, but actually from Delhi we are approving only 50 per cent of the proposals that have been forwarded by the State Governments. It is not the state Government but the National Highway Department in the State. That is why, maintenance is also not up to the required level.

There is another part, namely the urban links. The Union Government gave merely Rs. 8,000 per km. till last year. Last year, it was enhanced to Rs 16,000 per km. But over and above this Rs 16,000 the State Government has to spend its own money in order to keep that urban road link in a proper way. My suggestion is even this Rs 16,000 per km. is not at all sufficient. At least it must be enhanced to Rs 32,000 per km., if urban road link is to be maintained in a decent way, when especially urban road links pass through State capitals or other cities. So, the Government should enhance this amount. There are some special repairs which are required to be carried out due to flood damage or heavy rains. Even in this respect, the Government is not providing necessary funds. This year, for example, the national highways—for that matter even other roads—are very much damaged. The National Highways Department in our State has estimated that nearly Rs 40 crores are required for repairing all these damages due to flood in respect of national highways. But I

[Sh. V. Sobhanadræswwara Rao] wonder how much amount is going to be given by the Union Government for the repair of these flood damages to the national highways.

My feeling is irrespective of the formation of National Highway Authority the much-needed issue at the present juncture is delegation of powers. Even for perpetration and sanction of construction of a culvert along a national highway, it has to go right up to Delhi. Here the engineers have to approve it. Does it mean that there are no engineers in the State National Highways Department? There are eminent engineers, experienced engineers, engineers with all talent. Let those engineers prepare the estimate and take up the work and inform the Central authority here that they have planned and executed so and so work. Unless this delegation of powers takes place, lot of precious time would be wasted in forwarding the papers, proposals from the State headquarters to the national headquarters.

I would like to bring to your kind notice one example. The Union Government has already approved the conversion of a two-lane road from Ongole to Vijayawada, which is considered as a very heavy traffic intensity corridor, to 4-lane road. Land acquisition matter and several other matters are lying with the Union Government in the National Highways Department for several years and the proposals are not cleared and sent for necessary execution. My submission to the hon. Minister is, you kindly think over as to up to what level we can delegate the powers. If the delegation is not done, even to some extent, but merely setting up of this Authority is not going to solve the entire problem. I would also suggest to the Government that while in respect of Railways, when some natural calamity takes place and the rail route is dislocated, Railways are able to restore the tracks just in a matter of a few days, may be two days, three days or at the maximum, in a week. But when a similar dislocation has taken place on a bridge on a national highway, it takes months, sometimes even years to restore it. I would quote

one example. At Kesra, on national highway No 9. across the Munneyeru river in Krishna district, nearly 3 years back, one span of bridge was collapsed. A very heavy load vehicle was coming and that collapsed. The span was restored only to permit the cars and the passenger vehicles to pass over that bridge. The result of it is that even goods vehicles with just 20 tonnes load, for that matter, and even empty trucks and lorries were forced to go over very long distances when the Munneyeru is in spate. Our State highways are, therefore, damaged. My suggestion is, just like the railways, the national highways also should be in a position to restore that particularly damaged portion of the bridge on national highway due to some natural calamity in very short time so that people will not be put to suffering and the vehicle operators will not lose precious time.

Regarding the management of the Authority, it is proposed that one Chairman and five full-time Directors and four part-time Members will be there. We certainly have no objection for this. But our suggestion is that among the five full time members, let there be one representative from each region who in turn have to be rotated in between States in that region so that all the States will have its representative for some time, not all the time. In this way, there will be better coordination, understanding and cooperation between the Union and the States which is all the more required for the development and maintenance of these national highways which have to play a very vital role in the economic activity of the nation as a whole.

One of the objects stated in the Bill is that it will regulate and control the plying of vehicles on the national highway. I would like to make a suggestion that we have been hearing for quite some time that the Union Government has some plans to construct motels or rest houses for the convenience of the truck drivers and that the Government do want to bring a legislation so that the goods vehicles do not ply during certain hours during midnight to avoid and minimise the accidents. But still I think it is very very far

away. In fact, a very very important place like Vijayawada which is a junction of New Delhi to Madras as well as Howrah to Madras and Bombay-Sholapur-Hyderabad-Madras, we are not having rest house for the convenience of the operators, the drivers or the persons who work on these trucks. My suggestion is the Government should take necessary steps to establish as may rest places as possible for every 200 or 300 KM. Also in between, there will be several motels or some dabats operated by private parties, by the side of the national highways. Many a time, the common experience is that the trucks or passenger vehicles will be stopped on the road itself sometimes while the vehicles overtake those vehicles at rest. The accidents do take place.

So, at such places the Engineering Department should make some arrangements so that when the drivers of those goods vehicles or the passenger vehicles intend to go to the motels or the dabas they can park their vehicles in the margin of the national highway and stay somewhere out of the national highway. The national highway will thus be cleared of obstacles. I request the Government to examine this aspect and to take suitable steps for doing that so that the accidents can be minimised.

You were good enough to bring the motor Vehicles Bill some time ago. Of course, it is certainly an improvement when compared to the legislation pieces which are there during the British days. But, at that time, in spite of our repeated requests with the Government the Government did not oblige in bringing some amendment to spare the drivers from being harassed by the lower level police people. They are exploiting the truck drivers. It is leading to a lot of trouble. The Police people will be stopping the vehicle for hours and hours. When a vehicle has to pass from Kanyakumari to Howrah or even Guwahati, you can estimate how much precious time will be lost in the long route. Therefore, for some time at least, the Government must kindly think over and bring a suitable amendment so that these truck drivers are spared of the harassment from these

police personnel.

Sir, the State Government are collecting the Vehicle Tax. In 1975-76, the total Vehicle Tax that was collected in all the States was around Rs 200 crores. But now it is almost Rs 1000 crores. Our Union Government is getting thousands of crores of Rupees on sale of petroleum products and diesel. In fact, while in other countries the prices of these petroleum products have come down, in our country the Government has not brought down those prices. That is why the ONGC is making a lot of profit and the Union Government is getting profit. We do not have any grouse against that. But the point is that the Central Government may kindly spend that amount for the road development, for the maintenance of the roads. What is happening? The truck owners are weeping actually. The tyre prices are skyrocketing. In spite of the Government's directive that the tyre prices should not be enhanced, the manufacturers are not heading to the Government's advice. They are taking liberty to increase the price. Truck-owners have to purchase several sets of tyres even in one year which is putting a lot of financial burden on them.

Because of the bad condition of road, fuel efficiency also is very very low. My submission is that Government should spend enough money for maintenance and development of these roads. I am very happy after Shri Pilot has assumed office, he has increased this. He has taken the suggestion of the hon. Members and enhanced the Central Road Fund which was very very meagre previously.

Sir, in 1929, it was 3.5 paise per litre. Now, it has enhanced. The Government is going to get nearly Rs 320 crores. Even that amount is not sufficient out of which two-thirds are being given to the States and only one third to the National Highways. My suggestion is that in addition to these funds, the Government must spend from the general revenue for this road development sector.

[Sh. V. Sobhanadreeswara Rao]

My another appoint is this. There is one important missing link from Hyderabad via Nagarjunasagar to Guntur. It connects National Highways No. 9 and 5. It is a very important missing link. Similarly our State Government has proposed some 8 roads to be taken over under National Highways network. Since Independence, the Union Government and the Minister himself have conceded—not a single road in Andhra Pradesh was taken over or added to the National Highways. Of course, the present Minister is doing something. We are very happy for that. My suggestion is that the Government may take all such roads. They are very important roads which include the road from Vijayawada to Machilipatnam Port to be added to National Highway No. 9. There are very important bye-passes that are required at Eluru and Nellore Towns. In this connection, I would like to tell one thing. When our Government take one bye-pass road it so happens that the the National Highway Department is leaving the old road for its own fate. Until such time the State Government takes it over or the State R & D Departments takes it over. I think the National Highways Department should have that obligation to maintain that road till such period only. Otherwise, people are going to suffer. Similarly, I am happy to say that provision has been made to permit the private organisations or institutions to take up the National Highways and bridges. I am one who feel that mere Governmental efforts will not be enough. We have to encourage the private organisations and companies to associate in this very important national-building work of construction of National Highways as well as construction of Bridges. My only fear is that let this not be an Inland Water Authority experience. In this very House we have been told that the Indian Waterways Authority will take up improvement of the inland waterways. A very important navigation canal identified by the Government, from Krishna Barrage to Madras City is the Buckingham Canal. In fact, you were good enough to say that Government have decided already to improve that waterway and a few crores a rupees are also

allocated. To our surprise, till now, the work has not yet started. My submission is that the National Highways Authority is giving lot of hopes to the people of this country; its objective should be fulfilled and it should not go waste.

Finally, I would appeal one thing. With this National Highways Authority, it is not a stage to content ourselves. There are several lakhs of villages which are not yet connected with all weather roads. Let the Government think of such matters also and provide necessary funds for development of such villages and also connect them with all-weather roads. Only then, agricultural development, economic development and social development will take place and the farmers will be freed from the exploitation. Government should also try and take necessary steps to solve this.

[*Translation*]

SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA (Vidisha) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I welcome the Government decision of setting up the National Highways Authority of India and would like to give some suggestions on the subject.

Our young Minister, Shri Pilot has discussed the provisions mentioned in this Bill with various persons at various occasions and has given a wider base to the National Highways Authority of India with the combined efforts of other high officials. Besides, provisions have also been made for the development of connected state highways. For instance, all the main highways in the country should be strengthened and extended according to the assignment based on future requirements. Besides, the Bill provides for the best possible facilities such as Hotels, Motels and other tourist facilities. Extensive powers have been given to the proposed Authority for this purpose. I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister in this regard. No priority was given to the development of roads in the previous five year plan and the funds allocated in five year plans for developing the national highways and the state highways were inadequate, due to

which the Government could not afford to maintain those highways properly and I can say confidently that the maintenance of these highways has deteriorated in the last 10-15 years. During this period, the Government could not afford to undertake the projects of constructing bridges, broadening, expanding, strengthening and widening the roads. The Government could not afford to charge more taxes from common people in order to meet the financial problem. A provision has been made in the Bill that funds may be raised through issue of bonds or any other new scheme. I would like to thank the hon. Minister in this regard.

India is a large country constituting various states, traditions, languages and modes of living. Even if we want to strengthen the national integrity, it is essential to pay special attention towards the development of National Highways. Because tourism will encourage movement of people from one place to another and proper transport facilities would encourage tourism and more attention will automatically be paid towards maintenance of Highways. As a result thereof people would find it convenient to move from one part of the country to the other. It would definitely strengthen our unity in diversity. Without any help of Government machinery, we would be able to strengthen the national integrity more with public cooperation and tourism.

All the present national highways have been constructed on older designs. If we think about the future and evaluate them in the context of your 2001, we would find them incapable of carrying the traffic or trucks up to 50 tonnes in the next 20 years. They can bear the load of trucks carrying 15-20 tonnes load only. In the near future, trucks are supposed to carry not only 25-30 tonnes but even 50 tonnes of load. So, these highways have to be developed according to future requirements. The National Highways Authority of India is going to be set up, so this authority should consider these important facts while developing and strengthening these highways. The pattern of their network should be designed in such a way that it

meets the requirements of the fast moving traffic in the near future. These highways should be developed to bear the load of 45-50 tonnes carried by trucks. So their designs should be modified in such a way that may carry heavy load speedily.

Besides, the bridges built over them are quite narrow. They should be widened. Crossings are also of old design. In order to develop good highways for fast moving traffic, the Government will have to modify the developed techniques of Western countries like American to suit the requirements of our own country.

The provision of developing the facilities of hotel, motels, restaurants, restrooms, tourist rooms and tourist guiding centres—is a good step and must be appreciated. But the Government will have to select the highway on the basis of national priority. The Government ought to fix 5-6 National Highways just as Delhi-Madras, Kashmir-Kanyakumari, Delhi-Calcutta and Delhi-Bombay, on priority basis in order to develop them in the Five Year Plans. At the distance of every 25-30 kms., townships should be developed which should have the facilities of hotels, motels, diesel and petrol outlets and food centres. It would also provide means of employment to our innumerable unemployed educated youth. It is not necessary that the authority should bear the expenditure. The Government should formulate an action plan or a master plan and provide these facilities at the distance of every 25-30 kms. The Government have got the power to acquire the land; they should acquire land and then allot the same. The educated unemployed people would themselves start their own business. If the Government formulates scheme, they would themselves take loans from banks or invest the money themselves. The Government will not have to bear the expenditure. I would like to suggest that the Government should prepare a blue-print of this scheme which would enable us to provide means of employment in urban and rural areas and also meet the challenge of increased traffic in the coming 20-25 years. We wouldn't be able to

[Sh. Pratap Bhanu Sharma] meet the requirements of traffic by air-service or railways, but we will have to reply on our roadways. In the light of these facts, it is a timely decision. Everything regarding the possible resources of funds and determining priorities has been explained in it. I would also like to offer a few suggestions in this regard. The mobilisation of resources depends upon the attractive features of the plan and accordingly the funds would be mobilised from the people. Non-resident Indians have collected funds in foreign countries and they are interested in investing the money in the development projects here. The Government can get crores of rupees invested by formulating impressive schemes and issuing bonds. Experts will have to be consulted in this regard in order to formulate an effective plan which should ensure good return for the investment. I am sure that the Government would undertake the projects of constructing such highways that may meet the increasing requirements of the country. So far as cooperation is concerned nobody would lay behind. Many people are interested to cooperate with the Government in the development of the nation and the national highways. The Government can impose toll-tax for this purpose and formulate other schemes to recover the amount of investment within 15-20 years.

I would like to say something about Madhya Pradesh also. The hon. Minister had discussed the matter of national highways during his visit to this state last year. This State is situated in the centre of the country and a person has to pass through this State in order to go to any other part of the country. 90 percent of the total traffic pass through Madhya Pradesh to reach other parts of the country like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa or any other place in the South. The State Government has proposed to link Bhopal with Ahmedabad, Lucknow and other places by highways. Besides, NH 12 serves my area, Jaipur - Jabalpur Road, Ashoknagar-Vidisha, Bhopal E and I scheme of Government of India provides 50 percent of the total

expenditure given to the States in the form of grants. The project of Vidisha- Ashoknagar Road in Madhya Pradesh was forwarded to the Central Government for consideration and I understand that it has been included in the action plan as well. But it would be useless if adequate funds are not provided. So I would like to submit that if funds are provided during the current Five Year Plan period, the work on the project of strengthening and widening the 160-170 kms. road can be started. Similarly, the work of strengthening and widening Bhopal-Nagpur Road is equally important because there would be an exaggeration in saying that the traffic on this road has increased hundred times during the last ten years. Survey can be conducted in order to find out the truth. The Government must find out the way to arrange funds for this purpose in the next 2-3 years. The Project of Highway from Bhopal to Indore via Nasrullaganj, Khategaon will feed rural areas and these areas are 100 percent industrial areas. It includes the areas where cotton, soyabeans and sugarcane crops are produced and they are such areas which really need transport facilities. I want that proposal for constructing a road covering that area be invited from the State Government and given for consideration and approval to the National Highway Authority. The Central Government has many schemes like E and I. Link Road Development scheme and the Bye-pass Development Scheme. I expect the necessary funds will be collected and the schemes be given practical shape as soon as possible. I wholeheartedly welcome and support the Bill. With these words I end my speech:

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS (Bhilwara)
: Hon. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the National Highway Authority of India, 1988, Bill Under the Agency System work related to roads has given to the State Governments. The question is whether this responsibility should be taken over from them. The Government says that it does not want to take over but make some changes or rectify certain defects in the system. Section 4 of the Statement of objects and Reasons says;

[English]

"It is proposed that this Authority should take over, in a phased manner, the functions presently being performed by the State Public Works Departments".

[Translation]

This clearly states that State Governments have been given the responsibility of National Highways under an Agency System. As the functions are not being performed efficiently by the State Governments the Authority seeks to take them over. It is the right step to set up an Authority. But what type of Authority would it be? Will it be an autonomous body or will it function under the control of the Central Government. There is a lot of difference between the two styles of working. If an institution is granted autonomy, its style of working under goes changes. So the Government should exercise tight control over the working of the institution. It should not be granted autonomy so that there is no abuse of power. Hence there is a need to strengthen this system. A Zinc Smelter Plant has been set up in the Rampur-Agucha, district Bhilwara. An Authority has been set up for it. It is an autonomous body. How much of control the Government is exercising in the working of this Authority needs to be seen. If we keep this in mind the system can function efficiently.

The proposed authority will consist of a chairman, five full time members and four part-time members. I do not understand who will be the part-time members. Will they be state representatives or public representatives? States from where the National highways pass should be represented on the Authority. As it is not possible to have representatives of all the States in it at one time, the States should have their representation on rotation-basis for a fixed period of one year or so. This will ensure full co-operation of States in the development of National Highways passing through their territories. The number of part-time members in it should be increased. The present strength

of part-time members is not sufficient. Whatever is the number of full time members, be it five or more, the number of part-time members has to be increased. They can put forward the problems of their respective States. I want to draw your attention towards another point. The issue of labour has not been touched upon in this Bill. What provisions have been made in the Bill for the labour employed on National Highways on a permanent, quasi-permanent or temporary basis? This Bill does not mention the various facilities available to labour like provident fund and E.S.I. No provisions have been made for labourers engaged in the maintenance of National Highways. This will create problems for them and necessitate making provisions in future. I have another suggestion. I raised this matter in the Parliamentary Advisory Committee and once again draw attention towards it. For a long time I have been appealing to the Central Government to convert the State Highway from Ajmer to Bombay via Indore and Bhilwara into a National Highway. Till today nothing has been done in this regard. It was said that the World Bank would be asked for monetary assistance for this purpose. The hon. Member from Mandsaur, who is present in the House, is also well aware about the movement of heavy traffic on this Highway. He too will agree with me that this road needs to be given the status of a National Highway. This will strengthen the transport system in the area and people living there will be benefited. The hon. Minister represents Rajasthan. As he is well aware Rajasthan is quite backward in terms of roadways and railways. It is our good fortune that he has become the Minister of Surface Transport. We can now expect him to give a bit of attention to this State. The hon. Railway Minister does not extend his vision beyond Madhya Pradesh. The hon. Surface Transport Minister will contribute towards making Rajasthan self-sufficient at least in the matter of roads. This will help us work better for the development of Rajasthan.

Similarly, concrete steps need to be taken to combat the famine which affects Rajasthan every year. Many of my hon.

[Sh. Girdhari Lal Vyas] colleagues mentioned the various natural calamities affecting the country like floods or excess rainfall natural calamity strikes Rajasthan every year in the form of famine. As the hon. Minister would be aware of our leader the hon. Prime Minister's announcement that one member of every family living below the poverty line would be given employment. I suggest that the work regarding construction of roads should not be done through contractors but it should be entrusted to the Government Departments themselves. A land army of such people engaged in such construction works would help in the execution of this task. This will not only fulfill the promise made by our leader but also contribute towards national progress. Then we will not get to hear complaints regarding corruption. If the Centre takes initiative in this direction the States will follow suit. This will do away with the contractor system and the prevailing Corruption and other irregularities. The officers of the Central Government and the labour can contribute in larger measure towards national development, I hope the Government will give this matter serious thought and take appropriate steps because it is very important to root out the corruption prevailing today. This Bill provides that the private parties can also come forward and contribute in the construction of national highways if they are interested in it but my experience is that all rich private parties do not carry out their work honestly and have become millionaire only by exploiting the poor. If such private parties are involved in the construction of national highways, you can very well imagine as to how they would take undue advantage of lorries or trucks that will ply on them after completion of highways. I, therefore, suggest that only such honest private parties should be given priority which have full faith in Government policy of socialism and which could improve the lot of the people of this country.

A provision for the quality control, vigilance and for some other things has been made in this Bill. In this field we should work vigilantly. As it is well known that serious

allegations like taking commissions are levelled on officials, engineers and higher officers of the Department and therefore a suggestion for the formation of a vigilance committee whether on regional level, district level or state level, as the Government may think fit, was given. I will not ask the Government to include public representatives in this vigilance committee but I will ask the Government to formulate such Vigilance Committee and entrust them overall responsibilities of the construction, maintenance works and the quality of the roads and it should see that no irregularities (malpractices) are committed there and all programmes should be implemented in a proper manner as crores of rupees are spent on them. Timely implementation of all programmes is utmost necessary.

Although, I had to speak a lot on this Bill but in view of limited time, I would like to submit this much that all provisions made in this Bill should be implemented properly by the Authority which is being constituted so that the authority could contribute in the economic development of the country to maximum and strengthen the unity of the nation. With these words I support this Bill.

[English]

SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL (Muvattupuzha): Mr. Chairman, I congratulate the hon. Minister for bringing up this Bill for setting up the National Highways Authority of India, and I am supporting the Bill also.

I request the hon. Minister of allot more funds to the Authority so that it will not suffer for want of funds in future, and also to give more powers to the Authority to enable it do more work. Also, it should be decentralised so that the far-flung regions can be developed.

I come from the State of Kerala which is having the maximum rainfall in our country. Because of the high rainfall the roads cannot be maintained properly. The present Kerala Government is more interested in the devel-

opment of the coastal highway and coastal rail ways and waterways. Nearly 70 per cent of the people living in the interior areas are not benefited by their policies.

I am representing an area which is earning nearly Rs 300 to 400 crores of foreign exchange by the export of tea, cardamom, pepper and ginger. More than Rs 100 crores are earned by producing rubber, coconut and cocoa. So, I request the Minister to take a lenient view about our area, and to take up Cochin-Madurai highway. It is an inter-State highway. This highway was planned before by the British people came. They have not taken up this highway. There is not even an inch of railway line in this area. Nearly three to four million people are there, but there is not even an inch of railway line or highway in that area. So, I request him to take this Road as National Highway.

From South Tamil Nadu if they want to export or import some goods to Europe or America they have to go round about Sri Lanka and go to the Western countries via Suez Canal wasting lot of money on diesel oil and energy. If the Cochin Madurai highway is taken up it will save lot of energy by shortening this distance and it will also hasten the development of Cochin Port. This highway is very essential for that. So, I request the hon. Minister to take up this road. This proposal has been there nearly for the last 40 to 50 years. As there is no railway line at least this highway should be taken up. Most of the Adivasis and Harijans of Kerala are living in this area. For the benefit of all of them also, I request the hon. Minister to take up this highway at the earliest and to give enough funds for that.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA (Robertsganj) : Hon. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Indian National Highway Authority Bill moved by the Minister of State of the Ministry of Surface Transport.

Sir, I am listening to the speeches of hon. Members of both sides since morning.

The Ministry has executed many important works during the last 3-4 years whether it was the question of national highways or of Surface-transport or it may be a matter of regulating transport system. you are aware that our hon. Minister has been sending guidelines on different issue to the States on behalf of the Centre from time to time. Not only this but when he felt that his Department should be strengthened, he did it. You are aware that he strictly controlled the corruption prevalent in Delhi. That is why we can say that the situation has been improved a lot.

Sir, I have gone through this Bill. I am very happy that all aspects have been discussed in detail. Besides this, provision has been made for the construction, maintenance and development of highways and also for making them beautiful. In this Bill, the provisions for the construction of hotels and beautiful cities at different places have been made and there is provision to provide housing facilities for the workers engaged in the construction of highways. Today when we are discussing this important Bill, there is an urgent need to examine it in the national perspective. A good number of our colleagues have dealt with this point.

Still in our country, there are such backward areas whether they are hilly, desert, cyclonic, tribal or drought areas where neither railway lines nor national highways have been constructed. Therefore, we will have to remove these regional imbalances. (*Interruptions*) It is right that we have done a good job in this field and have laid down 61 thousand kilometer railway lines but no special plans have been formulated to link these railway lines.

Recently, while speaking about roads, one of our colleagues was telling that the Government did not implement our plans uniformly in all States. Similarly a Member from Telegudesam also complained about the provision of insufficient amount for the development and maintenance of the roads. But it is not correct. If you go to certain States like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh or

[Sh. Ram Pyare Panika]
 Bihar, you will feel that there is some bungling while same rules and regulations apply to them and the amount also remains same; Besides, when all estimates of State Agency are sanctioned, the same amount is made available to them. Therefore, I do not agree with Hon. Members of these States who say that they are not being allotted sufficient amount. Owing to these things some State Governments do not pay proper attention and as a result thereof their roads are in a dilapidated condition. I went to Bihar and saw that many stretches on the roads and the bridges were in a dilapidated condition and the people have to move downward but if you go to Uttar Pradesh, you will find that everything is alright there. Similarly the roads in Punjab and Haryana are also smooth. Some State Governments do the job within the sanctioned amount but our colleagues still complain that the amount provided was not sufficient. Now it is expected of the Authority that it will uniformly maintain the national highways but I fear that the officers and workers engaged in various Agencies for this work may not become surplus because the Agencies will cease to function after the Authority is constituted. Therefore, the Government should make some provisions for this purpose. Therefore, I request the Government to ensure employment to those people who are working in various Agencies while entrusting the work to the Authority. In this connection, the Government should take decision after discussing it with state Governments, otherwise the concerned Government may not retrench them for want of funds. You will have to take care of this point as it is a very important and humane issue.

16.59 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Secondly there is a provision in this Bill that the land should be acquired if and when necessary. Last year we had amended a law pertaining to the land acquisition. We will have to ensure that the farmers may not be

involved in the compensation suits. We know it very well that the farmers have not been paid compensation where land were acquired at the time of construction of the roads and highways in the country and States 10 years ago. Now the land of farmers must be acquired only after they have been paid 80 per cent compensation. The provisions of Forest Conservation Act also create some difficulties as they hamper construction of new roads and widening of existing roads. There are a number of irrigation and other projects included in the Seventh Five Year Plan but the Government is unable to complete them.

17.00 hrs

You will have to make a provision for the Authority if you intend to provide it a new structure so that the construction of new roads and maintenance works could be accomplished, then provision will have to be made for constructing the new roads. I want to submit one more point that this Authority should be given more powers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have spoken only for two minutes. I am going to give a very important suggestion. I want to suggest to the hon. Minister that a fresh survey may be got conducted to provide a network of national highways in the country. (*Interruptions*) Last year Railways helped a lot .

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : 10 members are yet to speak and only half an-hour is left.

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA : Is it started from me?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That is not the question. You please cooperate with the Chair. Shri Amar Roypradhan.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN (Cooch Behar) : I joint with Comrade Basudeb Acharia in opposing this National Highway Authority Bill piloted by Mr. Pilot the hon. Minister.

You know that our country has a federal structure. If the hon. Minister would like to forget everything and the idea that India as a union of States, then he can bring this Bill. Do not take the plea that these highways are in the Seventh Schedule and List No 23.

You know that there are 30,000 kms of highways which is only 2.5 per cent of the total roads in the country and 67 per cent of the roads are kutcha and muddy roads. On these 67 per cent roads, according to one survey report, 83 per cent of the population of our country move. The Minister does not want to take any interest in these roads. His only interest is to curtail the powers of the States and concentrate more powers in the Centre. That is the only idea.

If you go through the debates of the Constituent Assembly as also the debate of Parliament in 1956 you will find that everyone at that time was of the opinion that the policy and finance would be with the Centre and execution part would be with the States. Avoiding that, you are taking more powers to the Centre. The only plea you have taken is that the highways are very much in poor condition and they are not maintained properly. Have you ever studied the reason behind it? Are the States only responsible for this? You are saying that all the non-Congress (I) States are not maintaining the roads properly and you are blaming them for poor maintenance of the roads (*Interruptions*).

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I never said only non-Congress State are responsible. We have never said this we have said same of the States. There is no Congress (I) or non-Congress (I) here. We have not said Congress (I) or non-Congress (I), we have just said some of the States are not maintaining their roads well. That is what I said.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: All right

you said ' some of the States' But are they responsible for that? (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now try the wind up, Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Try to finish, Sir I have to call five more persons.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Do you know how much money you are spending on the development and research and on maintenance of the roads? In this connection, I just draw the attention of the hon. Minister that the road-rollers weighing twenty metric tonnes are maintaining the roads and pressing the roads, but the vehicles which are moving on these roads are weighing even more than fifty metric tonnes, particularly the Defence vehicles. If such vehicles move on such roads, how can you expect that the roads will be in proper condition?

The hon. Member from Kerala pointed out that there are some parts of the country where heavy rainfall is there. In North East, North Bengal and North Bihar also there are areas where heavy rainfall is there and where floods also are there. The roads there are very much muddy. But you are spending roughly Rs 1,250 crores for the maintenance of 30,000 kilometres of Highway. This amount is divided among different States. Do you think that this amount is sufficient to maintain these roads? Don't say that by having a Central Authority you can do everything. We know that you have taken away education from the State List to the Concurrent list. now what is the position of education? Since 1974-75, so many years have passed and now you are coming up with new names only. Instead of Government schools you are calling them *Navodaya Vidyalayas*. Just by doing this, you cannot do good to the people, you cannot do good to the roads of the country. So, Sir, I cannot support this Bill.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI (Mandsaur):
Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I express my thanks to you for providing me an opportunity to speak. I shall conclude within the time you have allotted to me. I support this Bill and congratulate the hon. Minister and also express my thanks to him for bringing forward this legislation. I would also like to add that he has taken a right steps at the appropriate time and I wish him success in his efforts.

I shall make a few suggestions and shall also put forward a demand. It is proposed to make provision of funds and for that purpose to float some bonds. In this connection, I would like to point out that only three months are left for the Budget to be presented and preparations for the same might be going on or are about to start. Black money worth Rs. 40 to 50 thousand crores is in circulation in our country. People spend this money on marriages, decorations and luxuries. You may please ask the Ministry of Finance and the Hon. Prime Minister to evolve a scheme like the income disclosure scheme so that people could advance loans to the proposed authority. The money so advanced should be exempted from taxation. In this way, the Government can raise thousands of crores of rupees which can be spent on the development of the country. One more way out could be to deduct an amount equal to the amount of income tax from the amount of interest which would accrue to the loan amount. A time limit of 5 to 10 years could be fixed for this purpose. This will provide some relief to the Government. It is my suggestion.

I would also like to make a submission that the existing laws relating to acquisition of land are very old. The loopholes in these laws are no secret to any one. Whoever wishes goes to the court and obtains stay order against these laws. This dislocates everything. Government should plug the loopholes found in these laws and save the people from their repercussions. The people of this country will remain grateful to you for this. If the Government is entangled in litiga-

tion in the matter of land acquisition, all the projects will be in the doldrums.

I would like to submit further that the State Governments have fixed their priorities in the matter of national highways. The Government should review those priorities and reconsider them. It is so because in certain cases politics is involved, certain cases are moulded by pressure and in certain other cases other things are involved. If the Government could reconsider these aspects it will fulfill the aspirations of the several hon. Members of this House.

Several of my hon. Colleagues expressed their views on Madhya Pradesh. In this connection, I would like to say specifically that there is no other way than to pass through Madhya Pradesh if some one from the Mewar region of Rajasthan wishes to enter Maharashtra *via* Nimar. That is why I have been requesting you time and again to extend the highway falling between Nasirabad to Mahu upto Bombay *via* Nasirabad, Bhilwara, Chitorgarh, Neemach, Mandsaur, Javara, Ratlam, Indore, Sendhwa. Large portion of this highway is already wide and is as good as a national highway. We will be thankful to you if you could include this highway in the priority of national highways.

I would like to make a special submission to you. As has also been said by Rao Sahib and Shri Pratap Bhanu Sharma, I would also like to say that the Government should also give patronage to small trucks of 8 tonnes capacity while evolving any policy for trucks. The hon. Minister looks after road transport also and that is why I am making this submission to him. Big truck damage the roads. However, there can be no two opinions that they are also a must. But the Government should provide protection to small truck owners. The trucks of 8 tonnes capacity carry load to the extent of 12 tonnes and two persons get job on each truck.

One more thing that I would like to say is that road tax being collected from trucks should be collected at a time for a period of 10 to 12 years by including the same with the

price of the truck. This will help the Government collect road tax at a stretch and the trucks will become tax-free. This will provide a lot of relief to the Government as well as the truck owners. I am making this suggestion after talking to the truck owners. You should consider this aspect.

I cannot help myself without expressing my thanks to you for making efforts to enact a good legislation like this. While you are going to construct the main office of this authority, you should also construct small offices at an interval of 250 to 300 kilometres so that the maintenance could be looked after properly. At the same time it should also be ensured that these offices do not extract money. Their work should only be to look after the maintenance work.

Finally, I would like to submit that the Government had done a good job by bringing forward a comprehensive Motor Vehicle Act earlier also. Now it is another good thing that the Government is going to do. This will help taking the people to 21st century. People will remember Rajiv Gandhi's Government for this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I express a lot of thanks to you for providing me time to speak.

SHRI KALI PRASAD PANDEY (GOPALGANJ): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I support the National Highways Authority of India Bill, 1988 which has been introduced in the House. A discussion on the Education Policy also took place in the House. The Railways had also furnished details of their activities in the House. We were expecting that the Union Ministry of Transport would also take some steps for the improvement of the national highways. The hon. Minister deserves congratulations for bringing forward this legislation.

The most important thing is that the national highways in themselves enjoy an important position. The condition of national highways differs from State to State. Though

the distances from Delhi to Chandigarh in Haryana and from Patna to Ranchi in Bihar are equal, the time taken to cover these two routes totally differ because of the condition of the roads. The journey from Delhi to Chandigarh takes 4 hours whereas the journey from Patna to Ranchi takes 12 hours even though the distance is equal. So far as the question of resources is concerned, I can tell hon. Shri Pilot with a challenge in this House that there is a discrimination. I am citing an example. In my constituency a national highway runs from Gopalganj to Dumariaghat. The national highway division is located at Dumariaghat. Tenders were awarded in 1987 with a view to widening this highway and the Union Ministry of Transport released Rs. 9 crores for this purpose. But I am distressed to say that on the one hand tenders were invited and work allotted and on the other hand the Executive Engineer spent Rs. 12 lakhs on this road in the name of maintenance. Now, I would like to ask as to what was the need of spending Rs. 12 lakhs when contract for the construction work of the road had already been awarded and the work was on progress? So far as the question of grouting and cutting is concerned, difference can easily be noticed in the roads of Bihar. So far as the question of resources is concerned all the hon. Members have spoken about it. But I have seen for myself in my constituency, Gopalganj that rollers, mixing machines and trucks of N.H. Department are lying idle and on the other hand we are talking of paucity of resources. After a few days these machines will be auctioned and given to their favourite persons. This type of loot is taking place there.

A road connects Patna with Gopalganj Headquarters via chapra on national highway No. 28. When I was a Member of Bihar Legislative Assembly, the Government of Bihar had written to the Central Government to include this road in the list of national holidays. (*Interruptions*)

The position of the independent Members continues to be the same even now. You should not be so hasty from the Chair.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Try to bring out the points.

[Translation]

SHRI KALI PRASAD PANDEY: First of all, a criterion has been fixed for the independent Members that they will speak at the end. Members speaking first are being given more time.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You come to the point. I don't want discussion.

[Translation]

SHRI KALI PRASAD PANDEY: I am resuming my seat. But I would like to ventilate my reaction that from the same Chair people are getting half-an-hour long time. Shri V.P. Singh is also an independent Member, but he is being allowed to speak for an hour. We make requests but in spite of that injustice is done to us. Therefore, I conclude.

SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK (SONEPAT): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the National Highways Authority of India Bill, 1988 which has been introduced by Shri Pilot in the House. I am of the view that Shri Pilot did a yeomen service by bringing forward this Bill which will improve the condition of all the national highways in the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, everybody is aware that Sher Shah Suri was the pioneer in laying national highways and it was he who constructed the National Highway No. 1 from Calcutta to Peshawar. Thus, its history is very old. I would like to make a few suggestions in this regard. Out of the total number of national highways existing now, a number of them had been declared national highways long back and a few of them have been declared national highways recently. As such most of the highways are

very old. There are several turns on these roads. When Shri Pratap Singh Kairon was the Chief Minister of United Punjab State, he used to say that he would set right the delaying tactics followed by Government employees and reduce the number of turns on roads. Similarly, I would like to say that better you do not set right the delaying tactics of the Government servants, but do reduce the turns and curves of the roads. (Interruptions)

This will save time, reduce maintenance expenditure as also the number of accidents on the roads. The Delhi-Ferozepur National Highway No. 1 which is called military road also passes through my constituency. It is a very old road and it passes through some villages. Speed breakers can not be built on this road because it is a military road and there are rules for every National Highway. Rohad is a big village in Rohtak district where many accidents occur and in order to minimise them a by-pass should be constructed. There is a State Highway which connects Meerut with Sonapat and Jind and goes upto Patiala. It links the three States of U.P., Haryana and Punjab. I would like to suggest that this road should be declared as a National Highway so that it becomes more useful and can be maintained properly. Improvements will definitely take place after the constitution of this Authority. National Highways are maintained by State Government employees. It has been seen that the State Governments appoint their favourite persons for maintenance of state roads. Executive Engineers and S.D. 'Os are sent for the maintenance of National Highways. The funds allocated by the Central Government for the maintenance of National Highways are misused more than the State funds. The formation of this Authority will take time and till then this work may be carried out through the agency system. It is true that the formation of this autonomous body will be of much benefit. However, after it comes into existence, the employees of the State Government should be taken on deputation so that they do not become surplus. It should be considered as to who would be the non-official member of

this Authority. It should have both technical and non-technical members. With these words, I thank you.

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me time to speak. In spite of being a Member of the Opposition, I support this Bill. This Bill has an all round perspective which is a good start. Roads play a central role in our traffic system. The first Bill on this subject was brought in 1956. But even much before that Sher Shah Suri had constructed a road connecting Patna with Peshawar. The need for a national highway was felt even then and that is why a national highway was constructed 4 or 5 hundred years ago. Even then wells were dug and trees planted along this road keeping in view the welfare of the people and to ensure that they do not face difficulties and are able to travel in comfort. At that time, also aggements were made for shops and these things are included in the present Bill as well, which is laudable. The National Highway between Patna and Calcutta is in a very poor condition. When our Hon. Prime Minister went on a tour to Bihar, the stretch of road which he covered was taken care of and some improvements were made on it. Had he not travelled on that road it would not have been improved. 50 per cent vehicles on the National Highway operate without permits. Many of the seized vehicles belong to the Central Minister. This is causing loss of revenue and ruining the roads.

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur): No vehicle of any Minister has been seized. Let us know their names.

SHRI RAMSHRAY PRASAD SINGH: You read it in the newspaper. I want to point out that the condition of the road 30 kms. beyond Patna-Calcutta National Highway going from Fatwa to Islampur via Sarwada and leading towards Gaya is deplorable. A meter-gauge railway line existed there previously but it was closed after nationalisation took place. This road which is 200 km long, should be included in the National Highway. It will ensure its proper maintenance. As you

have stated it is true that much expenditure is incurred on the maintenance of roads but even 50 per cent of the funds are not utilised due to which the condition of roads remains bad. It is Bihar's misfortune that maximum corruption exists there in which both politicians as well as bureaucrats are involved. The roads are damaged within 6 months of their construction. A 2 km. long stretch has been constructed in my constituency recently. It will not last even 6 months. Therefore, that stretch should also be included in the National Highway so that the people of that area are able to reap maximum benefits.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have to pass on to the next item, Half-an-Hour Discussion.

[Translation]

SHRI SHANTIDHARIWAL (Kota): I will take only two minutes.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If you really finish your speech within two minutes, I am ready to allow you. But, if you take more time, as still five Members are left over in the List, it will take more time. If you are so particular, if you all agree by consensus, I will extend 15 minutes for this subject and then we will take up Half-an-Hour Discussion after that. That will be extended further.

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur): Sir, first Half-an-Hour Discussion should be taken up and after that this subject should be taken up. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: We cannot do that. Generally, Half-an-Hour Discussion is not finished within half-an-hour. Half-an-Hour Discussion always takes more than half-an-hour. Therefore, we cannot take it up now. We cannot say at what time it will end. I cannot rake up that at that time. If you all accept, I will extend the time by 15 minutes. That will be adjusted afterwards. Members

[Mr. Deputy-Speaker] will have to take only two or three minutes. If anybody is going to take more than two or three minutes, I cannot accommodate. If you all agree I will proceed further.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: All right. I extend 15 minutes for this. Shri Shanti Dhariwal to speak.

[Translation]

SHRI SHANTI DHARIWAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support and welcome the National Highways Authority of India Bill, 1988. Our hon. Minister deserves to be congratulated especially because he has brought a separate Bill for the constitution of a National Highways Authority. If he wanted, he could have brought an amending Bill, amending the National Highways Act, 1988, but it is his far-sightedness that he has brought a separate Bill for which I thank him. I would like to offer 2 or 3 suggestions in this regard.

Wherever roads are constructed in the country, the common cultivators and the poor villagers are affected thereby in maximum numbers and have to face many difficulties. The major problem is of acquiring land. As hon. Shri Bairagi has submitted just now that whenever disputes regarding acquiring of land arise, people go to law courts and obtain stay-orders with the result that our development work is impeded. Munsifs or Magistrates issue stay-orders immediately in such matters. My suggestion is that provisions should be made under which the Government can acquire land as and when it wants and in case of any objection, no one can approach a law court so that the process of development is not stopped. Along with it, it has to be ensured that those people whose land is acquired, get due compensation. There are several thousands cases in which compensation has not been paid even after the passage of many years. At present the State Governments are responsible for land acquisition work and they have to face many

difficulties in this matter but with the formation of this Authority, the whole burden of this work will be shouldered by the Authority. Therefore, I want to suggest that maximum attention should be paid to the fact that the farmer whose land is acquired and if he has a standing crop on that land, he should get some compensation not only for his crop but also for his land and that too within a year. Arrangements should be made to acquire land in such a way that land is acquired; that the people have not to go to law courts; and that reasonable compensation is paid to the people promptly. One provision in the Bill is:

[English]

"The Authority will construct offices, workshops and residential buildings for its employees and construct way-side amenities."

[Translation]

It should not be so that these sort of expenses keep on increasing and the Authority constructs guest houses after every 100 kms but the maintenance of roads remains as it is. Therefore, we should remain careful about it and see that miscellaneous expenditure is minimised in the interest of better roads and their proper maintenance.

If the National Highway No. 12 from Jabalpur to Jaipur via Kota is extended upto Kanpur, it will be beneficial for the people, particularly, Adivasis and other people of Rajasthan. I want to submit that this short stretch of road should be declared as a National highway which will help in the progress of this region which includes Adivasi areas.

SHRI JANAK RAJ GUPTA (JAMMU): First of all, I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for bringing this important Bill at an opportune time. In view of the constraints of time, I want to present the problems faced by my constituency in brief. The hon. Minister is well acquainted with all the villages and roads in my constituency and he has perhaps seen the condition of every

road closely. He has made some promises as well. People come to Jammu and Kashmir from every corner of the country. Some come with the intention of a pilgrimage to Vaishno-Devi and some want to visit Srinagar. But there are two spots on this road where remains traffic jammed for 3 or 4 hours during monsoons. One of these spots is between Jammu and Sambha and the other between Sambha and Srinagar. It is essential to construct fly overs at both these spots. The Hon. Minister knows that another road lies between Jammu and Poonch. 37 km. of it is double track and the rest is single track. There is army as well as the civil traffic on it. So it requires to be converted into a double track road.

Side by side, there is one road called Mughal road, which connects the Poonch area with Kashmir. An alternate road has also been provided but it is lying incomplete. I urge upon the Government to sanction the required amount of funds at the earliest so that that pending work of this road may be completed.

Also there is a national highway from Kishtwar to Batote on which a hydel project named Dulhasti Hydro-electric project is located. At this site, a road passes on the upper stretches whereas a river flows at the foothills. It is the spot of frequent road accidents. Last month about 70 people had died in a bus accident in which the vehicle had skidded down the road. The road requires to be widened. I request the Government to allocate the required funds at the earliest in order to improve the lot of the backward classes in that area.

This year, there was an acute shortage of kerosene oil and petrol in the Kashmir valley. To meet the situation, food items had to be transported by helicopters. I request the Government to take steps to construct a tunnel from Batote to Banihal and also broaden the existing road so that the traffic may move on it through out the year. People go to Ladakh by this route but the tourists are stranded here for a period of 15-20 days. In view of the inconveniences caused to the

tourists the construction of a tunnel on this route is quite essential. In view of the increasing population and traffic, provision of four lanes on the national highways has become a must. With these words, I thank you and the hon. Minister for the introduction of this Bill.

SHRI SHANKAR LAL (Pali): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the National Highway Authority of India Bill. It is a fact that as per the item no. 23 of the schedule in article 246, only the Government of India has been solely empowered in regard to the maintenance of all the national highways so it would not be correct to say that this power has been transferred to them from some other authority.

Clause 10 of the Bill is shocking as it provides that:-

[English]

"In the discharge of its functions under this Act, authority shall act so far as may be, on business principles."

[Translation]

You are very well aware of the fact that ours is a welfare State and functioning on a socialist pattern. So the Bill should have been introduced in view of the public utility. Business principles shouldn't have been brought in it. Our objective is to provide the optimum facilities to the people through the national highways and avoid the frequent incidence of mishaps.

You know that our national average in regard to national Highways comes to 47.27 km. for every 100 sq. kms. while in Rajasthan it is just 27.12 km. In view of the backwardness of this area, this average should be increased.

The proposed authority should be autonomous in order to achieve the maximum results. Under clause 31 of the Bill, a person or a company may be authorised to undertake the work. But if you are going to materi-

[Sh. Shankar Lal]
alise the policy of nationalisation and socialism through this Bill by providing therein that:

[English]

'to such person as may be stipulated in the order'

[Translation]

If the Government assigns some work on contract basis to some individual, it would only encourage the contract system. So the Government should do all the work to be done by it, through the Authority. If the Government so desires, they may form a sub-committee of the Authority or find some other way, to do their work only through this institution of Authority but there should be a clear cut provision in regard to the contract to any individual so as to make it clear that the Authority will not promote any contract system:

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my views.

SHRI BAPULAL MALVIYA (Shajapur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the National Highways Authority of India Bill introduced by the hon. Minister.

The Bill is, in fact, a symbol of national development. I am sure that after the Bill is passed, the Government would undertake the projects of constructing the national highways of a high standard covering the farthest regions in the country.

There is a road called the Agra-AB road in my constituency. There is a crossing on this road. Everytime the train passes the crossing, people have to wait there for sometime resulting in the wastage of their precious time. It is a very busy road. In the Shajapur district of Madhya Pradesh, there is a place named Makshi where hon. Madhave Rao Scindia, at the time of his visit to that place, had promised to get an overbridge constructed for which I had also made a request to him. He had assured that CPWD

would construct the overbridge. I am sure that the Government would take immediate action in regard to the construction of the overbridge for which Railways have already accorded their sanction.

The tribal areas of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh are situated in the extreme interior. For this area, two road projects namely one Jagdalpur-Rajamundry road projects namely one Jagdalpur-Rajamundry road project and the other Bastar-Bijapur-Hydrabad road project—have been proposed. I would like to urge upon the hon. Minister to include the above road projects in their programme to get the roads constructed.

There are a few national highways in Madhya Pradesh rather their number in minimal. In my constituency there is no other road than the AB road. Even this road was constructed several years back. I, therefore, make a request for another road from Indore to Harda via Devas, as the present one is a very busy road. We are sure that the construction of this road would certainly bring in substantial improvement in the transportation.

I would like to suggest to the Government to link the big cities with high speed roads. I am very thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRI VJAY N. PATIL (Erandol): Mr. Deputy Speaker, while welcoming the Bill and supporting it, I would like to caution the Minister that we have to have the perspective planning in view of the fact that the traffic on these roads is increasing very fast. If we see the figures, 82000 trucks were there thirty years ago. Now there are more than three lakh trucks on the roads. Two wheeler traffic has started in a big way and multi wheeler vehicles are also coming up on the roads. Looking at these facts we must think of some alternative modes of transport also. For example, there is a thinking that Hydroelectric transport should be utilised for transport of minerals like iron ore, limestone,

coal, etc. The experiment has been conducted and it is also in practice in Kudremukh. If this mode of transport is adopted, I think, much of the burden on the national highways will get reduced.

Further we find only 500 km of national highways have four-lanes whereas about 40 per cent of the highways have only single lane. When heavy vehicles ply on the national highways the bullock-carts are also plying. There are 1.5 crore bullock-carts in India. So the single-lane highways should have side lanes for the bullock-carts. This will reduce congestion and these side-lanes will be useful for future expansion. If this is not done there is fear of encroachment of land near the highways. This authority should be empowered to prosecute people who encroach upon the land near the highways.

There is one highway called Ahmed bad-Baroda-Dhule. Aurangabad and Hyderabad. I would urge the hon. Minister to look into that. I am fortunate to come from a place where three national highways cross, namely, Dhule. If this national highway is constructed then it will facilitate flow of vehicles from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Lastly I would like to say there should be accident hospitals which should be owned by the National highway Authority because when road accidents take place special type of treatment is required to be given. These hospitals should be set-up near accident prone areas or where hospital are not available.

SHRI K.S. RAO (Machilipatnam): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Bill. I would like to point out this proposal made by the Minister in May, 1986. It took him and a half years to frame and introduce this Bill in Parliament.

I feel this Bill is going to help in improving and consolidating the condition of the roads in the entire country thus in a way integrating the entire country. So I request

him to go at a better speed in implementing the provisions of this Authority and making it extremely active by providing enough funds and also if necessary to give part of the national highways for construction to the private parties and empowering them to collect toll tax.

Sir, there is a Central road fund which is being collected at the rate of 3.5 paise per litre. It was done a couple of years back. In the meantime price of fuel has gone up by 40 times but the Central Road Fund remains at 3.5 paise per litre. I wish it should be enhanced.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): It has been enhanced.

SHRI K.S. RAO: Another thing is that you are spending only 50 per cent of the taxes being collected. This percentage must go up. Better roads will improve the economy. The role played by roads in the freight and passenger movement is of the order of 50% and 75% respectively. So the roads must be given better consideration.

Coming to Andhra Pradesh there is a Kesari bridge between Vijayawada and Hyderabad. It collapsed two years ago. I cannot say whether it was due to lapse on the part of State Government or the Central Government or it was on account of communication gap between the two. Now crores of rupees are being wasted by diverting the vehicles through other roads. So my emphasis is by increasing the investment on roads we will be increasing the employment potential. Indigenous material like granite is used and there is no wastage of foreign exchange either. So, an increased activity on the roads gives employment potential. It increases the communication and does not require any other external source of funds. I am sorry to note that the Government of Andhra Pradesh could not utilise the allotted funds for national highways.

My final request is let the speed be

[Sh. K.S. Rao]
more. Let there be effective implementation. Let this Authority's presence be felt everywhere for improving the condition of roads and communication.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, to start with, I thank all the Members who have taken part in this discussion and for their valuable suggestions. Why did the need arise? Why did we think over about this Authority?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This will continue tomorrow. Then, you can explain.

[English]

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

Implementation of Desert Development Programme

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we are taking up Half-an-Hour Discussion. Shri Virdhi Chander Jain.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN (Barmer): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have initiated the half-an-hour discussion on Desert Development Programme. There are three types of deserts in our country—desert, semi-desert and the cold desert. The condition of the desert is the worst and the areas of Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur districts have been constantly hit by drought due to scanty rainfall. Even at present, these areas have been in the grip of continuous drought for the last five years while the other regions of the country had a good rainfall, these desert areas are still facing drought. The Central Government started the Desert Development Programme in the year 1977-78 on the recommendation of the National Agricultural Commission. During the year 1977-78 and 1978-79, the Central Government provided a little financial assistance to implement this scheme and later on the scheme was executed during the period

1980-85. In the sixth five year plan, the total amount of expenditure had to be equally shared by the Central Government and the State Government. During the seventh five year plan, the Central Government decided to give the hundred percent amount as grant and the reply to my question also indicates that provision of Rs. 245/- crores was made in the seventh five year plan. I wanted to know the total amount of expenditure incurred since 1985-86 till date. When I happened to calculate it, I found that only an amount of Rs. 99 crore 97 lakh, 96 thousand has been incurred on this account. Now it is 1988-89 and in 1989-90, the period of seventh five year plan will be over but as per figures furnished in regard to the funds released by the Central Government during the year 1987-88, it stands at Rs. 39 crores and for the year 1988-89, it is Rs. 38 crores. Now the question is that if the amount to be released in the year 1989-90 is raised, it will be about Rs. 45 crores. The sum total of this amount comes to Rs. 145 crores. Now I would like to know that when the amount of actual provision was Rs. 245 crores, why the Central Government has reduced the amount to be released to the State Governments. Moreover, the Government would not release more than Rs. 145 crores by the Seventh Five Year Plan. Lesser release would lead to lesser expenditure.

I would like to submit that the State Governments utilised the entire amount which was released to them by the Central Government. The amount actually released has already been reduced from Rs. 245 crores to 100 crores by them. How can the full amount be spent if the Government is going to release only Rs. 75 crores each during the year 88-89 and 89-90 respectively. That is why our Desert area Development Programme has been a failure. One of the major reasons has been the inadequate expenditure on this head in the past. Amount of Rs. 245/- crores was allocated for the seventh five year plan only because of our pressure on the Government for the same. After that the situation worsened to the extent that no amount was given to the State Governments, due to which they could not