

tion of three Railway Divisions, i.e., Ahmedabad, Rajkot and Bhavnagar. These divisions are located far away from most industrial and developed city of Ahmedabad.

4. Nearly 150 passenger trains originate and terminate at Ahmedabad Railway Station.
5. It also controls major freight terminable at Kankaria, Asarva and Mars and trans-shipment yard at Valva Sabhamati, etc.
6. It is also not possible for officers at Vadodara attend day to day operations.

The creation of Division at Ahmedabad will not only benefit the people of Ahmedabad area but will also reduce the burden on Vadodara Railway Division.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government to re-consider the proposal for setting up a new Railway Division at Ahmedabad.

- (vi) **Need to provide more facilities at Jhansi and Lalitpur railway stations of Central Railway**

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, under Rule 377, in the public interest, I would like to bring to the notice of the House the need to provide facilities of issuing railway tickets for the places where the trains halt.

Tickets for Gwalior and Lalitpur should be made available for G.T. Express, Jhelam Express, Tamil Nadu Express and Andhra Pradesh Express at Jhansi Railway Station.

Similarly, tickets for Jhansi, Gwalior, Agra and Bhopal should be made available in Ujjain-Dehradun Express and Jhelam Express and for Urai and Lucknow in Pushpak Express at Lalitpur Station. Besides, provision should be made to make a halt of Chhatisgarh Express at Therra Railway Station and Punjab Mail and Bombay B.T. at Talbehat railway station.

Therefore, I urged upon the Central Government to provide required facilities at the abovesaid railway stations so that the problems of the railway passengers can be solved. All these railway stations connect the various districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

- (vii) **Need for early completion of incomplete irrigation projects in Chhota Nagpur-Santhal Pargana, Bihar**

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHUBANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA (Hazaribagh): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, irrigation facilities for just 3 per cent of the total land have been made available so far in Chhota Nagpur-Santhal Pargana in Bihar. All the dams constructed in the area either by the Central Government or the State Government or Damodar Valley Corporation serve the purpose of either generating electricity or supplying water to factories. Even the affected villages are not being provided electricity and water for irrigation. All the schemes forwarded to Central Water Commission are kept pending for years and ultimately these are rejected by one way or the other.

Adivasis in large number live in this area. Lakhs of people go to other states in search of employment. Devkali Water Reservoir Project, Tilaiya Upper Canal Project, Donaya Kala Project, Siwane Water Reservoir Project have been pending for years.

Therefore, I would like to submit to the Central Government to approve all the pend-

[Sh. Bhubaneshwar Prasad Mehta]

ing projects immediately so that irrigation facilities may be provided to that area. A master plan of the entire area should be formulated to provide irrigation facilities through small and medium irrigation projects..

14.33 hrs.

CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Customs Act, 1962, be taken into consideration."

The Bill contains proposals to amend certain provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, so as to ensure that goods imported on payment of scarce foreign exchange are used as quickly as possible for the purpose for which they have been brought into the country. Too often in the past it has been noticed that once goods are imported, they remain in the landing area for an unuly long period or in cases where they are warehoused, they are not cleared at the appointed time. In their 124th Report (1987-88), the Public Accounts Committee had dwelt on this situation and had recommended that certain basic changes in the law relating to warehousing are also essential not only for streamlining the working of the Customs bonded warehouses, but also in the overall interests of the economy. The provisions in the Bill seek to implement the directions of the Public Accounts Committee not only relating to warehoused goods but also goods imported for home consumption. In the process, apart from speedy utilisation of imported goods, optimum use will be made of space in docks, airports, container depots and warehouses.

The Bill seeks to reduce the period for which the imported goods can be left un-cleared. Secondly, it seeks to curtail the period for which the imported goods can be deposited in warehouses, pending final clearance. In the third place, the Bill prescribes current rates of interest on duty leviable on imported goods whether for warehousing or for home consumption directly, but not paid within the prescribed period. It is expected that these changes would result in imported goods entering the productive channel at the earliest and thereby resulting, amongst other benefits, in an increase in the productive base of the industrial units.

In brief the proposed amendments are:-

- (a) After 7 days of the return to the importer of the clearance documents duly assessed, the importer will be liable to pay interest on the duty.
- (b) The present period of 45 days for which imported goods are allowed to be kept in the landing area before they become liable to disposal by the custodian, is proposed to be reduced to 30 days.
- (c) The period of warehousing is being reduced from 3 months as at present to 30 days.
- (d) Before actual warehousing of the goods the importer has to deposit 50 per cent of the duty assessed, with the remaining 50 per cent to be paid at the time of clearance alongwith interest. Even where the first 50 per cent of the duty is concerned, the importer will have to pay interest if he does not deposit the amount within