I urge upon the Minister of Railways that construction work of this project should be accelerated.

[*Translation*]

(ii) Independent Department needed for the development and proper utilisation of herbs which are being used in life-saving drugs.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI (Begusarai) : Herbs used to a bound in India and particularly the Himalayas, but in our country a number of life-saving herbs are being exported to other countries at a very low price and those countries are using them in manufacturing life-saving drugs and then they sell it in our country at high prices. With the felling of forests these herbs are becoming extinct day-by-day. Herbs used in the treatment of asthma, cough, blood pressure and other diseases have almost become non-existent. Our ancestors have been using these herbs for the welfare of man since the ancient time. The foreign rule gave a great setback to the growth of herbs. Even after the independence of our country, the Government have not paid any attention to the development of herbs which are wholesome and effective. On the other hand they are being exploited by the foreign companies and capitalists. In our country the scheme for setting up an ayurvedic pharmaceutical plant has been kept in abeyance. So the Government should create an independent department for the development and use of herbs. They should make every effort to check its exploitation so that the increasing side-effects of the allopathic medicines could be checked. At present substandard allopathic medicines are being used by the people because of their low prices but the genuine medicines are beyond the reach of the common man because of high prices. The Government should, therefore, pay attention in this respect so that the poor and the general public may derive its maximum benefit and also our country may be able to earn foreign exchange. There should be qualitative improvement in the medicine and the exploitation of precious herbs is curbed.

[*English*]

(iii) Need to increase the freqneucy of air services to Leh.

SHRI P. NAMGYAL (Ladakh) : The Srinagar-Leh highway has closed for the winter months with effect from the 15th of November 1985, and the entire Ladakh region will remain cut off from the rest of the country for over six months. The only link with the rest of the country is by air through the 5-day weekly Indian Airlines services. In the past, there had been heavy rush of passengers on both Leh-Chandigarh and Leh-Srinagar routes, and the passengers, particularly during winter months had to face great hardships for non-availability of seats on these flights. The people of Ladakh region had been requesting the Civil Aviation Department to increase the frequency of air service to Leh by adding one service each on the Chandigarh-Leh and Srinagar-Leh routes, but no action has so far been taken. I, therefore, request the Minister of Civil Aviation to increase the frequency of air services to Leh in view of the area remaining land locked during winter months.

[*Translation*]

(iv) Supply of power to Rajasthan from Singrauli Super Power Thermal Plant till two units of Atomic Plant Kota start working.

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN (Barmer) : The State of Rajasthan is facing power crisis. Both the units of the atomic power units at Kota are lying closed. The farmers do not get power for more than four hours. About 2 thousand farmers of Barmer district have requested for power connections for irrigation but only 200 connections are being provided. Because of acute famine conditions, the farmers are giving priority to sowing of Rabi crop and fodder but non-availability of power connections is causing disappointment. They will not be able to produce Rabi crop and will consequently be badly affected by famine. Due to power cut, the small industries are becoming sick and entrepreneurs are facing economic crisis. Several rural drinking water supply schemes can be implemented if power is made available but due to irregular power supply, drinking water crisis has arisen in rural areas.

The Centre is, therefore, urged that both the units of the atomic power stations at Kota should be started on war footings. Till defects of these units are