

[Shri Dal Chander Jain]

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

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

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

[English]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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