

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Travancore-Cochin for the service of the financial year 1956-57, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 and 3 and the Schedule were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Title and the Enacting Formula were added to the Bill.

SHRI M. C. SHAH: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill be returned."

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be returned." The motion was adopted.

THE MOTOR VEHICLES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1955

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House concurs in the recommendation of the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha do join in the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Bill further to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939, and resolves that the following Members of the Rajya Sabha be nominated to serve on the said Joint Committee:

Shri T. J. M. Wilson Shri K. S. Hegde Shri H. P. Saksena Shri P. D. Himatsingka Sardar Raghbir Singh Panjhzari Shri Deokinandan Narayan Shri Amar Nath Agrawal Dr. Puma Chandra Mitra Dr. R. P. Dube ' Shri K. P. Madhavan Nair

<Shri R P Sinha

Shri S. N. Mazumdar Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji Shri T. Bhaskara Rao Shri Lai Bahadur Shastri."

Sir, the Motor Vehicles Act came into operation early in 1939 and soon after that the Second World War broke out. The provisions relating to the regulation and control of motor transport in the Act could not, therefore, be worked under normal conditions. Nevertheless, the Act did succeed in bringing about improved standards of driving and road safety and a measure of regulation of the competitive "small owners" of transport vehicles. After the conclusion of the War, it was found necessary to amend the Act generally to remove the defects revealed in practice, and, in particular, to give effect to the then agreed policy between the Centre and the Provinces which had been gradually evolved for the better co-ordination of land transport generally, and of road and rail transport, in particular. An amending Bill was accordingly introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly in 1946 and it reached the stage of report by a Select Committee. Its further progress was, however, halted by the constitutional changes leading to independence. Subsequently, other developments in the shape of initiative taken by some State Governments in nationalising sections of road transport made it necessary to reconsider amendments to the Act. With the finalisation of the second Five Year Plan, the trend of road transport development has become more clear and the amending measure has not come a day too soon.

The Bill before the House is the result of prolonged consultations and discussions with the State Governments and at meetings of the Transport Advisory Council during which it was found possible to reach a large measure of agreement on most of the proposals. The views of certain important associations of road transport operators and of users of motor vehicles, have also been taken into consideration. The present Bill also incorporates most of the provisions contained in the Bill as revised by the Select Committee of the Central Legislature in 1946.

The Bill has been before Parliament for over nine months. Along with the text, fairly elaborate notes on the clauses have been circulated which, I

hope, will be of use to the House when detailed consideration of the clauses is taken up. I would, however, like to take this opportunity to explain some of the more salient features of the Bill.

The most important feature of the Bill is Chapter IV-A, which incorporates certain special provisions relating to State Transport undertakings. The Motor Vehicles Act, as it stands at present, contains no provisions to facilitate the introduction of expansion of nationalised transport services. Some States have amended the Act with local effect only or promoted separate legislation to implement their schemes of nationalisation, of road transport. The creation of monopoly rights for their State Undertakings which such legislation sought to achieve was in some cases successfully challenged by the private interests affected, on constitutional grounds. The uncertainty regarding the amount of compensation to be paid to displaced private operators together with the provision under the Constitution as it stood then, which made the quantum of compensation a justiciable issue, also gave rise to difficulties and discontent. With the amendment of the constitutional provisions* relating to the creation of State monopolies and the payment of compensation for interest acquired by the State, the way is now clear to have a uniform law throughout the country in these respects.

The next important amendment relates to the question of inter-State traffic. The present law provides that a permit granted in any State shall not be valid in any other State unless counter-signed by the State Transport Authority of that other State. Though some of the States have entered into mutual agreements permitting the operation of a specified number of vehicles on inter-State routes, the position is unsatisfactory in a number of States. The negotiations between the States have been generally of a prolonged character and have often failed to produce any agreement. Instances are not rare of transport vehicles having to stop at the border of a State in the absence of any mutual agreement and passengers and goods have to be transferred to vehicles plying within the other State.

From the point of view of the economy of the country as a whole, it is of the utmost importance that there should be maximum freedom of movement for traffic from one State to another. At the meeting of the Transport

Advisory Council held in February, 1956, the States generally approved certain model principles on the basis of which inter-State agreements can be negotiated. The acceptance by States of these model principles will, it is hoped, facilitate the conclusion of agreements where such agreements do not exist. Nevertheless, it seems desirable that the Centre should have reserve powers to set up inter-State Transport Authorities for the regulation of traffic on inter-State routes. These powers are intended to be used only where a deadlock has arisen and mutual agreement is not possible. Further, it is felt that a provision of this nature will be useful as a ready means for the statutory implementation of any decisions which the Zonal Councils envisaged in the States Reorganisation Bill may take for the development of inter-State traffic. The relevant provisions for the setting up of inter-State Transport Authorities have been incorporated in the Bill under clause 57.

The Study Group on Transport Planning in their Report submitted last year had drawn attention to the fact that while in the U.S.A. and the U.K. nearly four-fifths of the goods vehicles operating on the roads were private carriers, *i.e.*, owned by industry and establishments moving their own goods, in India, the proportion of private carriers to the total number of goods vehicles was only about 23 per cent. One of the factors which has led to this lopsided development is the provision under the present law which requires the owner of a private carrier to obtain the counter-signature of the Regional Transport Authority of any area outside the jurisdiction of the Regional Transport Authority which has issued the permit, if he desires to extend his operations into that area. In States, which are divided into several regions for the purposes of the Act, this involves obtaining counter-signatures in many cases even for moving from one district to another within the State. In principle, there is not much of a justification for denying to the private lorry-owner the same freedom of movement that the owner of a private motor car enjoys. But the State Governments are not in favour of giving complete freedom of movement all over the country to private carriers. As a first step, however, towards securing greater freedom of movement for private carriers it has been agreed that provision should be

[Shri O. V. Alagesan.]

made in the Bill that where movement over more than one region within a State is desired, permits granted by the State Transport Authority shall be valid for such movement without the countersignature or any other authority. The State Transport Authority will, of course, be free to screen applications for such permits before issuing them.

Representations have been repeatedly made by associations of transport operators against the practice followed by many transport authorities in States, allegedly at the instance of the State Governments, of granting temporary permits for short periods to regular transport operators in order to avoid possible claims to compensation for loss of business in the event of nationalisation. Under these conditions, private operators are naturally reluctant to invest the capital necessary for opera-road services.

To remove apprehensions and to create conditions under which private enterprise can develop on routes and -areas where nationalisation is not contemplated immediately, provision has been made in the Bill to re-enact subsection (i) of section 58 laying down the period of validity of a regular permit as not less than three and not more than five years and making it clear by an amendment to section 62 that no temporary permit should be issued under that section in respect of any route or area for regular operation except for such short periods as may be necessary for a decision to be given on a pending application for a regular permit. It is hoped that when these amendments become law, private operators will have a reasonably sufficient security of tenure to enable them to function smoothly and develop their operations.

Amongst other important features of the Bill are the provisions for ensuring co-ordination of all forms of transport, licensing of conductors, setting up of Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal and enhancing of penalties for offences against the Act.

I have no doubt that the Bill, when enacted, will bring about considerable improvement in the regulation and control of road motor transport and facilitate the development of this industry at a quicker pace, so that the demand created by the second Five Year Plan can be met adequately. Sir, I move.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That this House concurs in the recommendation of the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha do join in the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Bill further to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939, and resolves that the following Members of the Rajya Sabha be nominated to serve on the said Joint Committee:—

Shri T. J. M. Wilson

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Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee

Shri T. Bhaskara Rao

Shri Lai Bahadur Shastri."

DR. R. P. DUBE (Madhya Pradesh): Cannot we have an adjournment for half an hour?

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar): We should, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have still three more Bills in the order paper set for today. Let us go on with the business.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am sorry that while whatever we will be discussing at this stage is meant for the Members of the Select Committee, I have to state that none of the Members that have been named now to form the Select Committee are present.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: I am present here.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: Only one out of fifteen.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: Congress Members may be away but Opposition Members are always present.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: I say that there are other Members also on your side who are absent.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Everything that the hon. Member says will be recorded.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: Whatever we speak is meant for the Members of the Select Committee but unfortunately as most of the Members are absent, I don't know whether they will care to look into the proceedings whilst they amend the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mukerjee, it is a Joint Committee. Every word that any hon. Member says is recorded and all the proceedings will be examined by the Members of the Joint Committee. Nothing will escape their notice.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: Unfortunately, most of the Members do not care to see whatever is said here. That is what I have stated.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA:- It is a wrong accusation he is making against the Joint Committee Members.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: These remarks may not be made.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: Generally, whenever a Joint Select Committee is formed, when any amendment is made by them, then it becomes very difficult, particularly for this House, to suggest any further amendments when that is accepted by the Government. Therefore, this discussion at this stage, in my opinion, forms a vital part of the changes that will be coming in the Bill in the Joint Select Committee.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wilson is also here in the House.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: Yes, I know, I have seen him.

Sir, a lot of changes have been suggested in this amending Bill. The original Act is dated 1939 and lot of changes have, of course, taken place in this country. But, unfortunately, the changed conditions of the country are not reflected in the suggestions made in this amending Bill. The hon. the Deputy Minister in his opening speech has dealt with many changes. But he has not dealt at length—though he made a passing reference to it—with the new Chapter IIA dealing with the licensing of conductors. In my opinion, the Joint Select Committee should delete this chapter altogether. We have

got to make provision for the people of this country so that they may be able to work for the prosperity of the nation, and those who work in the motor transport are part and parcel of our country and are the nationals of this country. This category of staff, that is to say, these conductors, are very poorly paid in the road transport and they are proposed to be licensed. I do not know what is the object of providing for their having to obtain licences before securing a job. They are very poorly paid and this is not a profession for which a person before leaving school or college will plan and decide that he will enter the road transport work and secure a job as conductor. Normally, when they seek a job if they find the job of a conductor they secure that job. Now, there will be difficulty for a man to get this job of Rs. 25 or Rs. 30 because the employer cannot employ the man if he does not have a licence. That job cannot wait for the man till he goes and gets a licence. He cannot get a licence in two, three or six months. When at last after three or six months, he secures a licence, he is required to go to a medical practitioner, pay him about Rs. 16 and obtain a medical certificate. Then he will go and pay a fee of Rs. 11 for a licence current for three years, I think. This, in my opinion, is not required. Licence may be obtained by a conductor provided he is given some security, provided he is given some advantage or amenity because he has obtained the licence. But this Bill does not say anything about giving the conductors any facilities or any protection or any amenity. The Bill only says that they should pay all this, money and obtain the licence and wait all this time and then go and secure a job on Rs. 25 a month. After a few months, the man may leave that job if he secures a better one elsewhere.

Then there will be another difficulty created by this licensing system. A "conductor" has been defined as follows:

" 'Conductor', in relation to a stage carriage, means a person engaged in collecting fares from passengers, regulating their entrance into, or exit from, the stage carriage and performing such other functions as may be prescribed;".

Now, if I go to a ticket clerk, under this definition of a conductor, he will not be the authority who can collect the fare from me. I will have to pay as a

[Shri B. K. Mukerjee.] passenger my fare only to the recognised man, the person who is the conductor and who possesses the licence for this purpose. No other person, an inspector or other officer in the road transport service will be authorised to come and interfere or collect our fares and give us tickets. That will be the difficulty experienced by the passengers. If any man other than the conductor challenges a passenger and obtains the fare and gives him a ticket, then in that case, he will be not a person having the licence and, therefore, he will be violating the law and, therefore, he will be eligible to get all the penalties that will be imposed. Therefore, I am of opinion that the Joint Select Committee should delete this chapter altogether.

Then again, this Bill has made provision for inter-State transport. But the operators, the workers engaged in this road transport, about 50 lakhs of them in this country, require a little more amenities to be provided by this amending Bill or by another Bill. Today road transport, particularly the stage carriage in most of the States is a monopoly service. These services are operated by the State Governments alone. There is no competition and so a man either serves in that organisation or goes without work. That is the position. And even after the amendment proposed in this Bill, the worker will not be provided with any amenity which he ultimately expects this Government to provide. When the previous Act of 1939 became the law, the conditions in our country were very different from what they are today. In our present conditions, the workers have got to be provided with more amenities. But this amending Bill is silent about these things. I mean the operators, the conductors, the drivers and other employees engaged in road transport have got no limitation of working hours. That should have been provided in this Bill, when we are amending the original Act. They must be provided with weekly rest. That is also absent here in this Bill. They must be provided with adequate medical facilities for themselves and their family members. But, unfortunately, these provisions are absent from this amending Bill.

I submit to the Joint Select Committee to take note of all these requirements of the workers operating this wad transport in this country which are all State undertakings in most of the States in the Union of India. There-

fore, it is more incumbent and more necessary that the Government should come forward with amendments of the original Act to provide all these facilities to the workers engaged in this road transport.

Coming back to the subject of conductors, under this proposed amending Bill, the rule-making power will rest with the State Government and the qualifications for the conductors will be specified in the rules made by the State Government. Therefore, it is likely that there will be difference in the qualifications prescribed for conductors in one State and another. If one transport service operates in two or three States, I do not know if a conductor having the qualifications specified in one State for obtaining his licence will be allowed to operate as conductor in another State where the Government of that State had stipulated a higher qualification for its conductors. There may be such anomalies created by this clause. Therefore, in my opinion, if a provision for the licensing of conductors is found to be absolutely necessary—I personally feel that it should be deleted from this amending Bill, but if the Government and joint Select Committee feel inclined to retain this new chapter, Chapter II-A—then in that case, I suggest that the rules providing for the qualifications of conductors should be transferred to the Central Government, because if the Central Government specifies or fixes the standard qualification, that will be maintained throughout the country. But if you leave it to the State Governments, then there will be differences in this respect. Therefore, it will create anomalise. Therefore, I submit this rule-making power in this respect may be taken over from the State Government and the Ministry of Transport may be authorised to frame the rules in this regard.

I have nothing more to add excepting to say that the Government, the Transport Ministry and the Joint Select Committee must think more about the workers who are the real operators of road transport and show more sympathy to them. They should be provided with more amenities that are required by them today.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Sir, the hon. Member who did me the honour of speaking on this Bill had a few observations to make and I shall reply to those points.

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE (West Bengal): Can't hear anything. Please come to the mike.

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SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: I shall raise my voice.

He said that the changed conditions in the country had not been reflected in the Bill before the House. In fact, the provisions that have been incorporated in the Bill and which I explained in my opening speech all relate to the new provisions which were not in the previous Bill and which take the changed conditions into account. What are they? After this Bill was referred to the Select Committee some ten years ago and after they have reported, several States have started nationalising their passenger transport and some their goods transport also and a fear arose in the minds of the private operators that the sphere of nationalisation will be further extended and that their interests will be harmed. The question of compensation also was frequently raised by them. Now, for the first time, we have taken that position into account and are providing for payment of compensation on a uniform basis. Some States up till, now have got some legislation passed; U.P. is one such and the compensation provisions that we have adopted more or less closely follow the U.P. provision. Now, hereafter, these provisions will apply to all States and the fear that the State will intrude at any moment into the sphere of private enterprise has been once for all removed. I had occasion to remark in the other House also, Sir, that with reference to goods transport, the doubt has been set at rest. It has been decided that there would be no nationalisation of goods transport services by the States with a few exceptions; the exceptions have been only in the case of hilly States like Manipur and Himachal Pradesh. Barring these two exceptions, Government will not enter into the goods transport services field by way of nationalising them.

Regarding nationalisation of passenger transport, certain procedure has been very clearly laid down. The State Governments concerned have to submit programmes of their nationalisation phased suitably and get the approval of the Centre. Now, barring these cases, private transport will be free to expand their services. They need not have the suspicion that at any moment their services will be taken over by the Gov-

ernment because the spheres of nationalisation will be clearly defined. Here, I should like to say that this is one of the very important new conditions that the Bill takes into account and seeks to provide for.

He also raised the question of inter-State traffic. We have been very much handicapped by the fact that traffic from one State does not freely flow into the other State. The State Governments, in spite of very good intentions, have not been able to come to mutual agreements on this matter. It is true that some States were able to reach agreements but there were other cases where mutual agreement was not possible. In all such cases, wherever inter-State traffic is obstructed, wherever the State Governments find themselves in a position where they cannot come to an agreement on this matter, the provision now being made is that an inter-State Transport Authority may be set up and that body will take charge of issuing permits on the inter-State routes. I should think that this is a very urgent need. In order to supplement railway transport, we have to press into service road transport, as well; not only road transport, we are also having plans to enlarge inland water transport. Any and every mode of transport has to be pressed into service for the movement of goods that will be produced as a result of agricultural and industrial expansion during the second Five Year Plan period. So, this is a current and an urgent need which this Bill seeks to provide for. So, my hon. friend can disabuse his mind of the fact that we are only repeating the performance of ten years ago. There are other provisions which in any case have to find a place and since they have been delayed, all those provisions have been now put in.

He referred to the fact that in this Bill we have not provided for the amenities to be given to the workers employed in this important industry. I had occasion to remark in the other House that this aspect of the matter was being taken care of by the Labour Ministry. They are going into the matter. I think there is also a Private Member's Bill that has been introduced in this House. I do not know whether it has been discussed or not but the Labour Ministry is seized of the matter and they are going to bring forward

[Shri O. V. Alagesan.]

legislation with reference to the workers that are employed in this industry and that is why we have not provided for that in this Bill.

The hon. Member pleaded that there should be no need to license the conductors. Even now, there are rules by which the State Governments do license these conductors. It was not made a specific part of the Act but under the rule making powers, the State Governments had made provision for licensing the conductors. What we here seek to do is to establish that practice in a more permanent form and to give statutory recognition to it. It is considered necessary that these conductors who are perhaps as important as the drivers—this category of workers who come into contact with the public more than the drivers themselves—should be licensed, should be certified medically, etc. Therefore, it is that all these things are being provided for. So, I do not think there will be any difference of opinion and if the hon. Member feels otherwise, I hope he will have occasion to revise that with reference to the need for licensing this category of workers, namely, conductors.

The other point that he raised was that since the State Governments are vested with powers to prescribe the minimum conditions under which the conductors can be licensed, there may be a difference between one State and another and that that matter may give rise to anomalies. I do not think that that will create any serious difficulty because they are going to prescribe only the minimum conditions and I think it can be provided for under the rules that the conductors and drivers licensed by one State, when they operate in another State, will be treated as drivers and conductors licensed by that particular State. There will be no difficulty. Even if there be any legal difficulty I am prepared to look into this matter further at the Select Committee stage, and if any alterations are needed in the wording of this particular clause, that can be very well done by the Select Committee.

Sir, these are the points to which I wanted to reply.

SHRIMATI SHARDA BHARGAVA (Rajasthan): May I know why the necessity of having any lady Member on this Select Committee was not felt when you have nominated 15 Mem-

bers of this House on the Committee? Motor vehicles are used by women also and I think they can also very well give their advice if they were put on the Select Committee. What is the reason? I want to know.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well somebody has to make way.

SHRIMATI SHARDA BHARGAVA: What is the reason?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think it is too late now. It will be remembered when the next reference comes up. I hope the Minister will please take note of it.

SHRIMATI SHARDA BHARGAVA: He can just say why this was so?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Through oversight probably. That is all.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: At least in the future amendments to that effect may come from the lady Members.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is :

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Shri	T.	J.	M.	Wilson
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THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN) : Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the declaration of certain highways to be national highways and for matters connected therewith, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, the National Highways Bill, which has received the assent of the Lok Sabha, is a simple but an important measure. Before the enactment of our Constitution, the development and maintenance of roads were treated as a matter mainly of provincial concern but, under the Constitution, Parliament has the power of enact legislation for the declaration of highways in States as national highways.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SHARDA BHARGAVA) in the Chair.]

While it is possible to state accurately when the first railway was constructed, for a record of roads and wheeled vehicles we must go back to the earliest times. This is only natural as good roads and easy communications are an index of civilisation. Civilised administration in India as indicated by roads and streets has been established as a result of archaeological and other discoveries to be at least 5,000 years old. Roads are mentioned in the epics and Buddhist literature and on one of the rock edicts of the Emperor Asoka. I do not, however, propose to delve into ancient history further at present.

With the advent of railways, feeder roads attained disproportionate importance, trunk roads, particularly those running parallel to the railways, being neglected and falling into a state of disrepair. Railways have made us railway-minded, which is not to be wondered at, considering the carrying capacity, comfort of travel, and range of operation of rail transport with special reference to long distance traffic.

The need for the improvement of the Indian road system began to be felt when the new motor transport began to come on Indian roads after the close of the first World War. So far, Indian roads had been accustomed only to the centuries old cart traffic but the fast

4—22 Rajya Sabha/56.

moving motor vehicle began to take a heavy toll of Indian roads. Naturally, there was an insistent demand from the public for more and better roads. This demand was put before the Government through a Resolution passed by the Central Legislature in 1927 for the appointment of a Committee to go into the whole question of road development in India and make suitable recommendations.

The Committee appointed by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Shri M. R. Jayakar made certain very important recommendations. One of them was that an additional duty of customs and excise of 1 annas per gallon should be imposed on motor spirit for the specific purpose of road development and that a non-lapsing Central Road Fund should be set up to which the proceeds of the duty should be credited. In accordance with this recommendation the Government of India set up the Central Road Fund with effect from the 1st March 1929. The duty was raised to 2 annas per gallon in 1931. The constitution of this fund represents the first important measure taken by the Centre to promote road development in India.

Through the Central Road Fund was intended to be a source to supplement Provincial expenditure on roads, Provinces found themselves unable to spare any substantial funds for road development from their own resources owing to the economic depression of the thirties. It began to be clear then that the Centre should take a more active part in the development of Indian roads. A proposal was mooted for including a provision in the Constitution Act then on the anvil to permit national trunk roads becoming in some measure a Federal charge. But, as it was considered that Provinces should have autonomy to the maximum extent possible, the proposal was not adopted.

Thus on the outbreak of the Second World War the responsibility for the development and maintenance of roads in India rested on the respective Provinces and Princely States. The roads were not, however, generally in a fit condition. Naturally, the Government of India, therefore, had to embark upon the improvement of roads of military importance in various parts of India through substantial grants made to the Provinces and States from the Defence Services Estimates.

It was realised that if the roads must play their role not only for meeting the nation's need in times of emergency but also for promoting the economic prosperity of the country, the Centre should take over the responsibility for developing and maintaining an efficient* arterial road system. The problem was first considered in a scientific manner by the Nagpur Conference of Chief Engineers in December, 1943. As the House is probably aware, that Conference recommended the division of Indian roads into four classes, namely, national highways, Provincial or State highways, district roads and village roads. The national highways, which were to be the framework for our country's road system, were to connect major ports, foreign highways, and capitals of Provinces and large States. The Conference also suggested that the Centre should take over financial liability for the development and maintenance of national highways and that they should have an effective say in the use and control of those highways.

The Provinces were consulted on the recommendations of the Nagpur Conference and, after discussions at meetings of the Transport Advisory Council, certain highways were provisionally approved by the Government of India as suitable for inclusion in a system of national highways and they accepted complete financial liability for these highways with effect from the 1st April, 1947. It is interesting to note here that even in the U.K. the Ministry of Transport took over responsibility for certain "trunk" roads from the local authorities only in 1936 and began financing them entirely from national funds. In the U.S.A. it was in 1944 that the Federal Aid Highway Act authorised a national System of Inter-State Highways which was not to exceed 40,000 miles and which was to connect the principal metropolitan and industrial areas on a regional basis and incorporating therein the main routes of strategic importance for national defence. With the partition of the country, some of these highways ceased to be in the Indian national highways system. A few additions were made subsequently to the system consequent on the integration of the former Princely States with the Union of India.

¹ The Nagpur Plan laid down a total mileage of 25,000 for national highways and national trails in undivided

[Shri O. V. Alagesan.]

India. The reduced target for post-partition India would be about 21,000 miles but, owing to considerations of finance, it has been possible for the Government of India to accept liability for 13,800 miles of national highways only for the time being. This mileage included about 1,600 miles of missing road links and 150 unbridged major river crossings.

The development of the provisional national highways system was rather slow in the beginning, chiefly due to difficulties coming up in the wake of partition. Thus up to the end of 1950-51 that is, before the commencement of the First Five Year Plan, only about 110 miles of new roads and 3 large bridges were constructed and about 1,000 miles of existing roads improved in the system. The expenditure incurred on the development of the highways up to the 31st March, 1951, was Rs. 6-23 crores only.

I am glad to say that the progress has been far more rapid and satisfactory in the First Five Year Plan period. The expenditure ceiling approved for the development of national highways under the First Five Year Plan was Rs. 27 "8 crores and, I believe, practically the entire amount has been spent. The actual physical achievements covered the construction of 636 miles of new roads, 30 new major bridges, besides a large number of minor bridges and culverts and the improvement of about 4,000 miles of existing sections of national highways including the provision of one-lane asphalted carriageway, in respect of improvement works, the actual achievement was nearly twice that originally envisaged, while in the construction of missing links, the target was practically reached. As regards major bridges, the progress could not be so good mainly due to the fact that these bridge works took considerable time in preliminary investigations, selection of sites and preparation of designs and detailed estimates before actual execution could be taken up.

Under the second Plan, a provision of Rs. 55 crores has been made for the development of national highways. It is expected that this would enable us to complete the construction of about 900 miles of new roads and 60 major bridges, the widening of about 1,500 miles of existing roads to two-lane carriageway, and the improvement and asphaltting of 4,700 miles of existing sections in the national highways system.

I regret that the provision approved for the development of national highways under the Second Five Year Plan is not large as I would have wished it to be. With the funds expected to be made available to us, it is not possible for us to consider any additions to the national highways system. I am aware that demands have been made—also amendments have been moved to this Bill—from various quarters for the expansion of our national highways system.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar): Madam, is there quorum?

{Quorum bell rings}

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI-MATI SHARDA BHARGAVA): *(After a count)* There is quorum. You may proceed.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Unfortunately, we are not in a position at the present moment to consider any additions to the national highways system. I hope the situation will improve so that we may consider in due course the inclusion of new highways in the system and the provision of the necessary funds for the development of these highways under the third Five Year Plan.

I do not want to take much of your time. The National Highways Bill merely seeks to obtain your approval to the existing provisional system of national highways and the assumption by the Government of India of statutory responsibility for their development and maintenance.

Before closing I feel tempted to quote what Hilaire Belloc said about the Road many years ago:

"Not only is the Road one of the great human institutions because it is fundamental to social existence, but also because its varied effect appears in every department of the State. It is the Road which determines the sites of many cities and the growth and nourishment of all. It is the Road which controls the development of strategies and fixes the sites of battles. It is the Road which gives its framework to all economic development. It is the Road which is the channel of all trade and, what is more important, of all ideas. In its most humble function it is a necessary guide without which pro-

gress from place to place would be a ceaseless experiment; it is a sustenance without which organised society would be impossible; thus, and with those other characters I have mentioned, the Road moves and controls all history."

Madam, I move.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI-MATI SHARDA BHARGAVA): Motion moved:

"That the Bill to provide for the declaration of certain highways to be national highways and for matters connected therewith, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: Madam Vice-Chairman, I welcome this Bill because it is in accordance with the provisions of our Constitution and it seeks to mend certain lacuna which is still there. Madam, our road policy and our road expansion programme is still governed by what is known as the master Nagpur Plan of 1943. This plan, as you are aware, was meant to be implemented in 20 years' time but as the hon. Minister has pointed out, its implementation was not taken up seriously before 1950-51. Therefore, the implementation of this programme will have to be delayed, but we are now told in the Report of the Planning Commission that by the end of the next Five Year Plan, that is, the second Five Year Plan, the Nagpur Plan will be fully implemented. I find that during the first Plan period an expenditure of Rs. 156 crores was made; in all about Rs. 200 crores were spent during the first Plan period, as is stated in the Report of the Planning Commission itself, on the overall development of the road system throughout the country—national highways, Provincial highways, village roads and all that. Out of this Rs. 27 or Rs. 28 crores were spent on national highways. It is also stated in this Report that whatever target was set for the first Five Year Plan had not only been achieved, but more than achieved. In the second Five Year Plan they have made a provision of Rs. 246 crores for road development and Rs. 25 crores are to be paid from the Central Road Fund and it is stated that with this expenditure the Nagpur Plan will be fully implemented. Now, I find that the Motor • Vehicles Taxation Enquiry Committee

[Shri Rajendra Pratap Sinha.]

has stated in its Report that an expenditure of Rs. 750 crores in all will be required in order to fully implement the Nagpur Plan, on the basis of prices of material in 1950-51 and on the basis of the labour cost prevailing in that year. Whatever has been spent so far comes to about Rs. 200 crores and a provision of about Rs. 271 crores has been made in the second Five Year Plan so that the total expenditure would come to Rs. 471 crores. I cannot understand how it is thought that the Nagpur Plan will be fully implemented by an expenditure of only Rs. 471 crores when the Motor Vehicles Taxation Enquiry Committee of 1950 says that a sum of Rs. 750 crores will be required to fully implement the Nagpur Plan. I cannot, Madam, reconcile these two sets of figures and I would like the hon. Minister to throw some light. It is very important that the Nagpur Plan should be fully implemented. Twenty years was the time set from 1943. It is imperative that this Plan should be implemented for more than one reason.

When the Nagpur Plan was drawn up, the engineers who drew up this Plan did not have the background of the two Five Year Plans that we are implementing—the one that has been implemented and the second that we have embarked upon—but they had certain vision of progress of their own. We have radically changed those estimates of the earlier years. Nobody in those days could anticipate what would be the economic development of the country under the impact of these two Five Year Plans. Now, the engineers themselves have stated that the development of the roads should be in consonance with the economic development of the country. The provision of expenditure on the road development should be related to the development expenditure in the other sectors. Now, you will see that even the plan of 1943 for road development is out of date today. So, that is the minimum that we have got to do. That must be done. I cannot understand how the Government proposes to implement this programme with an expenditure of Rs. 471 crores alone, when it is estimated that full implementation of the programme requires Rs. 750 crores.

The other point that I would like to urge is this. It is high time that in the light of the development of our eco-

nommy during the course of these two (Plan periods, we must draw up another ! master plan for our road development. Now, it is accepted that we are not to give a step-motherly treatment for the road development or the road transport development. So far the development of road or road transport was neglected, because we wanted to foster the railways alone. It is a well-known fact—the hon. Minister is aware of it because he is the Minister for Railways as well—that the railways cannot cope with the traffic that is offered to them today and even by the end of the second Five Year Plan—with all their vast development and expenditure of Rs. 1125 crores or so—the railways will not be able to carry all the traffic that is offered to them. Therefore, it is now an accepted policy that we should develop our roads and road transport. Now, a condition precedent to the development of road transport is this that the roads should be developed. The quality of the existing roads should be improved. Not only that. It is also imperative for the economic development of the country that new areas should be opened up by road development. If you look to the targets fixed for the different items in the second Five Year Plan, you will find that we have raised the targets practically in every sector of the economy. We want to open up new mines, we want to open up new areas for agriculture. Now, all that cannot take place on the roads that exist today, on the railway lines that exist today. They will have to be done in the ' interior. We all know today that most of our economic development, opening up of the mines, of the forests, is retarded because of communication bottlenecks. All that cannot be done by railways. Roads are the only means by which we can develop and open up new areas. Therefore, I submit that the Government should seriously consider the question of appointing a high-power committee or a commission to examine our road policies, our road programmes, the master plan, the Nagpur Plan itself and to draw, in the light of all the development programme we have or we are likely to have in the future, a new plan altogether for our road development. Now, the Nagpur Plan says that we must have a national highway and trails amounting to 25,000 miles. It is stated in the road statistics that is supplied to us that at the present moment our national highway is 13,800 miles. I would like to know from my hon.

friend whether it is not the policy of Government to fully implement the Nagpur Plan in respect of the national highways by the end of the second Five Year Plan. If so, does he expect to build or to bring under this scheme of national highways another 11,200 miles to make up the 25,000 miles, as suggested in the Nagpur Plan? If so, does he think that with a provision of about Rs. 55 crores in the second Five Year Plan, he will be in a position to deliver the goods? I would like to have clarification on these important issues.

Now, I would like to give one or two suggestions with regard to the national highways. It has been stated in the report of the Planning Commission that the West Coast road that is being developed today with Central assistance will be three-fourths completed by the end of the Plan period. I would earnestly request that this work should be completed by the end of the second Five Year Plan and this road should be taken up as a national highway. It is an important route. There is no parallel railway line running to that. The economic growth will be expedited if this is brought under the national highway. After all the master plan has enunciated certain principles for taking the road system under national highways system and it fulfils all the requirements for declaring it to be a national highway.

Then, I have given an amendment also to this effect that the Dhanbad-lamshedpur road which passes *via* Puru-lia should also be taken into the national highway scheme. Now, you may remember that while discussing the Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Bill, the Home Minister has given an undertaking that this road will be declared a national highway. Therefore, I have given an amendment that this should be declared a national highway in this Bill itself.

Then, I have looked at the map that has been supplied to us by the Ministry of my hon. friend and I find that our two borders, the western and the eastern, are not adequately covered by the national highways. The defence requirements should receive priority for declaring a road under the national highway. Not only that the roads there need to be declared national highway, I find that there are not adequate roads serving these two frontiers and I think that these two frontiers should have

enough and adequate roads in order to give security to the country.

Now, there is another point I would like to bring to your notice and it is this. We are importing large quantities of asphalt which is a material required for making roads. I find that our imports in 1953 were of the value of Rs. 5,29,05,000. In the year 1954 it was Rs. 2,28,91,000. And all these years we have been importing this product. It is the endeavour of the Transport Ministry to get this country self-sufficient not only in the matter of the road materials, but also all the equipment and machinery required for the development of roads. I would like to know—and I am very glad that to a very large extent the efforts of my hon. friend's Ministry have been successful—what efforts they have made to make this country self-sufficient in the supply of asphalt. I would like to know whether steps have been taken to make this country self-sufficient in the matter of asphalt or else any alternative product is being developed to replace the use of asphalt as a road building material. As far as my knowledge goes, no effort has so far been made. I would like to know the views of the hon. Minister who is moving this Bill, whether he considers that this foreign exchange should not be saved and whether we should not become self-sufficient in regard to this product.

Now, a word regarding the Central Road Development Fund to which my hon. friend has referred. You 3 P.M. win gnd] tnat thjs fund] is composed of contributions out of the excise and custom duty on petrol. As far as my information goes, so far we have been paying Re. -/2/6 per gallon of petrol realised from excise and custom duty. This contribution of Re. -/2/6 has been in existence ever since 1931, although you will find that the duty on motor spirit has been raised from Re. -/6/- in 1928-29 to Re. -/15/- today. You will also find, if you look into the accounts, that although the duty has been rising and to some extent the expenditure also on road development has been going up, the contribution to this fund has not been in keeping with the rise in the duty that has been imposed on petrol, whether excise or customs. Now, the whole idea in the beginning was to levy this tax and give Re. -/12/6 out of

Re. -/6/- so that a proper Road Development Fund may be built up and our road plan may be independent of the fluctuations of the budgeting every year. You know that out of this fund grants are made to the States for the development of roads. Now the taxation on the motor spirit or the motor accessories is so heavy that not much room is left for the States to tax these commodities in order to meet the expenditure on their road development programme. The States have got to meet this expenditure out of their general revenues. It is rather unfair that the Centre taxes these commodities exorbitantly debarring the States to tax them and does not make adequate contribution out of this taxation to the Central Road Fund. I would submit that the contribution should be substantially increased and that my hon. friend should take up this matter with the Finance Ministry in order that the contribution may be raised and the Central Road Fund strengthened to meet the increasing demands on this fund for the development of roads.

My hon. friend also referred to the instances of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. He can take up this matter with the Finance Ministry and point out to them that in the United Kingdom the entire tax on sale proceeds from motor petrol between the years 1909 and 1926 was assigned to the Road Development Fund. Nothing was touched. The principle was that the motorists must meet the cost of development and maintenance of the roads, and it was only in 1926, when the system of road development in the United Kingdom practically attained a very high level and when the road system was adequately enlarged, that a small portion—I do not remember the exact percentage—only one-third or one-fourth of the tax collected from motor spirit was appropriated to the general revenues. So, I think in order to develop our resources for the financing of the construction of new roads and the maintenance of the old ones, this fund needs to be enlarged, and that is the suggestion that I could put forth for the consideration of the hon. Minister.

Now, the Study Group and the Taxation Enquiry Commission have again examined this question and they think that at this rate of Rs. -/2/6 contribution, about Rs. 600 crores will be

accumulated in twenty years' time. We know about Rs. 750 crores are required for fully implementing the Nag-pur Plan. Therefore, they think that this Rs. 600 crores will be entirely eaten away for maintaining the roads that are already in existence. So funds could not be made available for the construction of new roads out of this contribution of Re. -/2/6. We are very keen to develop the roads in the interests of our economic development, and, therefore, I have made the suggestion that the share of the contribution from the motor spirit taxation, or the motor tax itself, whether customs or excise or other things, for the Central Road Fund should be considerably enlarged, so that monies out of that could be advanced for road development. A token grant of only Rs. 60 lakhs for the whole of India for village-road development was made—just, imagine what Rs. 60 lakhs is for the development of roads. They have no funds, they cannot help it. Therefore, I say strengthen this fund, as it has been done in the United Kingdom and other countries, as large a fund as possible, so that you can liberally give grants for the development of the provincial, the district and the village roads.

There is one more point that I would like to bring to your notice. The Nag-pur Plan had advised the constitution of a Road Board. Now they have suggested that this Road Board should be an independent authority which should deal with the detailed policy and day-to-day administration of road planning and programme. They thought that the Road Board will be a proper body to implement the road programme. I would like to know from the Minister what the policy of the present administration is, whether they have given up the idea of having a Road Board, an independent body, altogether, or whether they still think that this will serve any useful purpose. The Taxation Enquiry Commission and the Study Group which was appointed later on have suggested that this is a vital recommendation of the Nagpur Plan which ought to be implemented. I would like to know the views of the Minister on this point. Thank you.

SHR^r B. B. SHARMA (Uttar Pradesh) : Madam, I have not much to say about the policy of the Government in regard to road development. My only suggestion is in respect of two items.

One is that National Highway No. 27, which is running from a place called Mangawan to Allahabad, might be extended *via* Jaunpur to Azamgarh and Doharighat. The road is already there. It might be taken up, it might be declared a national highway. Another suggestion is this. They have already declared the road from Banaras, Ghazi-pur up to Gorakhpur a national highway. That is National Highway No. 29 in the list. They are going to construct a road bridge at Doharighat over Dagra river. Now, I wish that that bridge might be constructed in such a way that it might become a road-rj/m-railway bridge so that they might extend the railway line from Doharighat to Gorakhpur opening up that track which has no railway line in that area.

Another suggestion which I would like to make is that, if we are going to plan our roadways as well as the railways keeping in view the strategic importance of our border areas, particularly Gorakhpur which is going to be the State border between Nepal and India, I wish that the railway line of the Northern Railway which operates from Allahabad to launpur might be extended up to Gorakhpur *via* Azamgarh and Doharighat. That would open up that area to broad-gauge railway also and connect Gorakhpur directly with Bombay and other places which are of very great importance. The North Eastern Railway has no broad-gauge but only metre-gauge, and therefore it is very difficult to carry the traffic in an easy way.

If these two suggestions of mine are taken into consideration, they will facilitate trade and commerce in that area, particularly during the period of the developments envisaged in the second Five Year Plan.

Another thing that I would like to say is that roadways must be constructed in order to see to the strategic importance of our border areas. I agree with my friend, Mr. Sinha, that in the map which has been supplied to us, the border areas are practically left out. This fact must also be borne in mind so that we might be able to connect these important places where we may have to defend our territory. With these remarks, I support this Bill.

SHRI J. S. BISHT (Uttar Pradesh): Madam Vice-Chairman, I welcome this Bill as far as it goes, but I must confess that I am deeply disappointed that

there is no mention of any national highway along the Himalayan regions. For the last four years, there is not a single opportunity which I missed in trying to bring to the notice of the Government the imperative necessity and urgency of providing an internal line of communication to serve the whole Himalayan region extending from the Kumaon Hills to Kashmir. In fact, even when the first Five Year Plan was under discussion, I brought it to the notice of the Government that that was a region which was being completely neglected by the Government in so far as transport facilities were concerned. Down in the plains we have got many types of communications. We have got the seaways, the waterways, the roadways, the railways and the airways, but here this vast area, as I said, extending from the Kumaon Hills to Kashmir, inhabited by ten million people is entirely dependent on one type of communication, *viz.* roadways. At present, the position is that there are only a few roads which connect these hills with the plains, and these are constructed by the various State Governments. For instance, there is a road in U.P. connecting the Kumaon Hills with the plains. There is a road connecting the plains with Simla in Himachal Pradesh. At another place there is a road connecting some portions of Kangra with the Punjab, and there is a road connecting Pathankot with Sri-nagar. There is no road, however, interlinking these roads. They are all disconnected roads, one separated from the other, by high mountains and hills. If you look at the map, you will find that there is no link connecting these roads and serving as an internal line of communication throughout the whole of this region. As you know, all these Himalayan regions are very desperately poor mainly because of the deficiency of good and cheap communication and specially communication which would link one portion with the other, which are so supplementary and complementary to each other. We also learn from the papers as the Government of India must have learnt that the Chinese Government has built—not contemplating but actually built—a vast highway connecting Lhasa right up to Sinkiang which is the portion adjoining Russia and Kashmir. There is no reason why there should not be a parallel internal line of communication on this side which connect the Himalayan regions on our* side from this portion right up to Kashmir. From whatever way you look at

[Shri J. S. Bisht.]

it, whether it is the strategic point of view or, what is more, the point of view of the uplift of the people of these regions and their economic development, where no industry whether it is fruitgrowing, or potato growing, can make any headway unless you provide them with a big national highway. I think it is very necessary that the Government should do this. The Deputy Minister himself read out a sermon to us on the utility of these highways, without which so many things cannot be done. In fact, that is much more applicable to these regions, which have got no other means of communication than these roadways. The Deputy Minister, or his Ministry, seems to have made up his or its mind. All that they have provided for is about 13,800 miles as against 25,000 miles that were planned by the Nagpur Plan, and what they are providing here is only about Rs. 55 crores in the second Five Year Plan as against Rs. 27 crores which they had spent in the first Plan and Rs. 6 crores before the commencement of the first Plan. Now, if you make this national highway linking Naini Tal in Kumaon Hills with Srinagar in Kashmir, I submit it will not cost you more than Rs. 1 or Rs. 2 crores.

DR. W. S. BARLINGAY (Madhya Pradesh): Why should all national highways begin from Naini Tal?

SHRI J. S. BISHT: My friend seems to be allergic to Naini Tal. I did not that all national highways should begin from there. But here in this < Naini Tal is the centre of Kumaon Hills, as Srinagar is the centre of Kashmir. I am only asking that you should interlink all these places, which are already linked with the plains, in order to provide an internal line of communications. All that you have to do is to fill up the gaps or the missing links. A couple of crores of rupees spent on this will be a very great boon to the people living in this region and will go a long way in raising their standard of living. I will, therefore, strongly submit that the Government should favourably consider this proposal. In this particular region, in spite of the Five Year Plans that you are carrying out in the whole of the sub-continent of India, you are doing absolutely nothing all these years, except for the Daniyal Pass that is being built in Kashmir. There is nothing done in this region except one or two

community projects. In those hill tops they hear that there is a big Plan going on in the sub-continent of India. Let these people also have a share in that movement for uplift. I, therefore, hope that the Government of India will give some serious consideration to this proposal which I have made and construct a national highway linking up this whole Himalayan region.

DR. W. S. BARLINGAY: Madam Vice-Chairman, I rise to support this very important Bill. This Bill is important although its size is very small, and that, shows that nothing depends upon the size of anything. The importance of a thing is very different from its size. There are a few observations which I should like to make, since we are on the subject. I have very carefully looked at the map of national highways and I want to state here what—I do not know—may be considered perhaps fantastic. Nonetheless I want to lay down certain principles according to which national highways in this country ought to be developed. Any geometrician will tell you that the main purpose of any road system in any country is that you must be able to go from one point to another in the shortest possible manner. That is the first principle. Now, if you are really serious about this principle, then any geometrician will tell you that there are only two ways in which highways ought to be developed in any country or in any State. One principle is that these highways ought to run parallel to each other and at right angles to each other, at certain specified distances. That is one way of doing it. The other way and which is a better way of doing it is that you shall make roadways after the pattern of a cobweb, that is to say, a cobweb has a centre and round that centre we have got, so to speak, round and round and round and then there are the diameters which pass through the centre. That is the cobweb sort of arrangement. Now, I feel that the cobweb sort of arrangement of roads and national highways is really a very important matter. Of course, I know that there are mountains and there are rivers and all the rest of them; I am perfectly conscious of this fact. But nonetheless, speaking in a mathematical way, I would say that the road system of the country ought to approximate, as nearly as may be, to a cobweb. That is one point. I need not dilate on this point very much because the importance of it should be obvious.

Then the second point that I wish to mention in this connection is that we ought to look a little ahead of the times. We ought to look to the future. We are now developing not merely road communications but also air communications between different places in this country. Now, it very often happens that our planes get engine trouble. I am making a suggestion for whatever it may be worth. This may be considered very fantastic but I suppose it is not unreasonable. This is what I am suggesting, that the roadways ought to be, as far as possible, parallel to the air-ways so that if there is any aeroplane getting engine trouble, it may be able to land on the roads. There is nothing very fantastic about it. If you think about this suggestion in a sympathetic way, you will find that it is a good suggestion. We ought to look ahead a little. If for instance at Jhansi; —let us say between Nagpur and Delhi the plane develops engine trouble, if you have a road-space near about Jhansi which will serve as a sort of runway, and you are in a position to alight or get down on the road, there is nothing wrong in it. It will save so many lives. For that you will have to reserve certain spaces along these highways where you will not plant trees because trees obstruct the getting down of the planes on the roadways. Now that leads me on to a third point.

The third point is the utilisation in a very profitable way of the lands which about the roads. I have got a very serious complaint both against the railways and against these roadways. The complaint is that on both sides of the roads you invariably fail to plant the proper species of plants and trees. In this connection I may point out that in those old days when Baroda was a State, the late Sayaji Rao Gaekwad, a person of hallowed memory, was a very progressive monarch and he had passed a law in the old Baroda State. That may be looked into and if I am not failing in my memory, I believe that according to the Baroda Law so far as the land¹ abutting the roads were concerned, the owners of those lands were required to plant trees by the side of the road, in between their land and the road. You might think of such a law. In this connection I might add that the kind of trees that ought to be planted has also got to be taken into consideration. You ought not to plant trees just as you have been planting trees, for instance,

in New Delhi, which bear no fruit, which bear no flowers. Of course, it is true that they are green all the year round perhaps, but nonetheless I say this very seriously and I make this as a sort of complaint that you are planting trees in New Delhi which involve really a waste of time and space and money of this country. Look at the way you are planting trees, for instance, in Rashtrapati Bhavan. It is a most absurd thing to do.

Then the fourth point that I wish to say in this connection is, with regard to the utilisation of the existing railway bridges. I will take an instance. There is a railway bridge over the Narmada at Hoshangabad. On both sides of this bridge, there is a road and if this bridge could be permitted for being used by motor cars and so on, then there would be a direct road link between say, Bhopal on the one hand and Hoshangabad on the other and that will lead on, of course, to Delhi and other places. There is no reason on earth why the railways should not allow the railway bridges for being used for the purpose of vehicular traffic on the roads also. This is a suggestion which I wanted to make very seriously. That would save a lot of money.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND (Hyderabad) :
Who will guarantee the safety of the railway line if somebody removes the bolts?

DR. W. S. BARLINGAY: But the point is, these matters may be examined and if it is ultimately found that these bridges cannot be so used, then all right, I will have nothing to say about it. But this has not been examined in the way I am asking it to be examined.

So far as those portions of the national highways which fall within the municipal areas are concerned, I have to make a very definite suggestion. I have always found them extremely congested. For instance, in the case of Itwari near Nagpur, which is on the national highway between Bombay and Calcutta, I can assure you that, there is such a terrific traffic and there is so much obstruction to traffic on the highway passing from one end of Nagpur to the other that for passing these five miles you require about an hour. I say this out of personal experience. I, therefore, very strongly suggest that whenever you pass a municipal town, you

[Dr. Y. S. Barlingay.]

should have a ring road round the town, and this is a very important matter, because there should be as little obstruction to highway traffic as possible.

I have no objection, of course, to any highway emanating through Naini Tal, but I would certainly suggest that there are some roads which ought to be regarded as national highways almost immediately. Take the road from Jhansi to Gwalior. I have examined the map very carefully and I find that the link between Gwalior and Jhansi is missing. I am not sure whether there is any road there. Of course, there is a railway line. But there is no direct road between Jhansi and Gwalior. I do not see any point in not making this a national highway and not immediately constructing the missing links if there be any.

Then I would suggest that Adilabad should be connected with Nagpur. Adilabad is very near Nagpur, as the crow flies. But I find that after Hinganghat on this road—namely the road between Nagpur and Hyderabad—the portion between Adilabad and Hinganghat has not yet been constructed and it is very necessary that in order to complete that highway, the construction of this road should be undertaken immediately.

I find that so far as this Bill is concerned—unfortunately, I have not heard the hon. the Deputy Minister's speech—there should be a very definite plan for the development of national highways, and we are entitled to know what this development plan would be. As I said, unfortunately, I have not heard the hon. the Deputy Minister on this matter. But I would bring to his notice that according to his own note which has been supplied to us, in such a great country as India, we have only about 13,800 miles of national highways. This is certainly too small a mileage for such a large country and I, therefore, seriously suggest that the sooner we have a master plan for the whole of India, a master plan showing all the proposals with regard to the highways, the better.

Thank you, Madam.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI-MATI SHADRA BHARGAVA) : Hon. Members will kindly be brief in their remarks, since we have a long list of Members who want to speak.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Madam Vice Chairman, I welcome this Bill which is the first Bill of its kind and we are glad that we are going to have national highways. But I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether on these national highways, when they are used by buses going from one State to another there will be any sort of levy imposed by the State Government or whether the traffic on these national highways will be entirely free. I may take a concrete case. Suppose a bus or a truck is registered in Delhi State and if it wants to travel only on this national highway right up to Bombay, will the intervening States ask the bus to pay anything or will it be travelling free? Just now if a lorry has got to go from Delhi to Bombay it passes through Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh before going through Bombay State and it has to pay road tax in all these three States. The hon. the Deputy Minister has in his Bill said that there will be only a charge for ferries, for tunnels and bridges, but he has not said anything about the general road tax. I do hope that there will be no general road tax levied. You know that motor vehicles are at present very heavily taxed. An hon. Member has already pointed out that at present the excise duty on petrol charged by the Government is more than the price of petrol, and out of this excise duty only two and a half annas are given to the Road Fund. So, every user of motor traffic is contributing to the Central exchequer a very substantial part of his expenses in the shape of excise duty on petrol. All motor vehicles at the time of registration have to pay a very heavy charge and if over and above that the Central Government is going to levy some charge for the use of these national highways, I think it will become almost prohibitive. You know it is very essential to develop road traffic in this country. We have only a small mileage as compared to the population and the extent of the country and it is very essential that the highways should be developed.

In what way should they be developed? There I beg to disagree with the remarks of the previous speaker who pointed out that they should be built like cobwebs. I may point out to him that in a very vast country, if you are going to link up the capitals of the States and the big cities, you will have to construct mostly radial roads con-

necting up these big cities. As far as I can see, the national highways are following that policy of connecting the main big cities of India. I will point out here that the South as usual, is the sufferer in the matter of national highways. U.P. is a Gangetic plain and there are a large number of big cities in it. So, you will find a larger concentration of national highways in U.P., Bihar and Bengal, but if you come down to the South, probably, as it is a plateau, the number of big cities is very small and, likewise, the number of national highways is smaller. I do not want to be parochial but I submit that Hyderabad is going to be the capital of a very big State and it is almost the centre of the Southern plateau but it is not as well served by national highways as could possibly have been if greater care had been taken in this matter.

Madam, a point has been raised that we should have a national highway on the Himalayas. It will be a good national highway for the tourists, but the main object is to connect up these hilly spots with the plain areas to enable the products "of the hilly areas, the fruits, to easily come to the cities for consumption there and, in the reverse direction, to enable consumer goods and manufactured articles of the cities to be transported to these hilly areas. Therefore, it is more important to connect all important hill areas in the Himalayas with the big cities in the plains. A highway right along the Himalayas at a height of about 7,000 feet or 8,000 feet which will be very expensive may not be useful in developing the economy of that area. It may be utilised by the tourists for going from one place in the hills to another.

So, Madam, I do not want to make - a long speech. I welcome this Bill and request the hon. Minister to pay a little more attention to the South and to transfer a larger part of the excise duty earned out of petrol to the maintenance and construction of the national highways.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA (Bihar): Madam Vice-Chairman, this measure has not come a day soon. In the absence of any law on this subject, the position was rather uncertain and indefinite. This Bill will give definiteness to the whole situation. Madam, roads are the arteries of trade and commerce. Railways are today

the most important channels of trade & commerce but railways are overcrowded, overcrowded so far as the carriage of passengers is concerned and overcrowded so far as the carriage of goods is concerned. The other alternative mode is of inland water transport. This form of transport is not yet developed and it will take some time before it can be developed. Therefore, due attention should be paid and I am glad is being paid to the development of these national arteries of trade and commerce. My friend from Bihar referred to the Nagpur Plan. We should pay proper attention to the Nagpur Plan and try to implement it but we should not forget that the Nagpur Plan was formulated in the year 1943.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: So, I am asking for other plans.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: I am supporting you. Why are you impatient? Don't get impatient.

The plan was drawn up in the year 1943. India was then passing through a period of serious internal civil turmoil, civil strike, the 1942 movement, popularly known as the Quit India Movement. India was threatened with invasion from external sources: the Japanese were knocking on the eastern gates of India. Therefore, the whole plan was mainly conditioned or influenced by the demands of internal security and security against external aggression. Though it was not expressed in so many words anywhere in the Plan, all the same, it was mainly influenced by the demands of internal and external security. Even today, the demands of internal and external security should not and cannot be ignored. All the same, it has been rightly pointed out by the hon. Member from Bihar that the first and second Five Year Plans should form the background of any plan of road development in India. In the light of these considerations, I feel that there is a case for a revision or a review of the Nagpur Plan and for the formulation of a modified plan.

Madam Vice-Chairman, I would now briefly refer to a few clauses of the Bill and seek some clarification from the hon. Minister. Clause 2 which defines a national highway excludes that portion of the highways which runs in the municipal areas. I would like to know why this exclusion is necessary. Is there anything in the Constitution or in any

[Shri B. K. P. Sinha.] other law or, are there practical difficulties which necessitate the exclusion of these portions from the national highway? I find that while in clause 2 portions are excluded, in a modified sense clause 8 includes these portions also though this inclusion is preceded by saying, "Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act...". All the same, the legal position would be that those portions would not be the property of the Union; the Union Government cannot have any legal dominion over them. All the same, this Act empowers the Union to enter into certain agreements with the municipalities. This, in my opinion, is an anomaly and it may give rise to difficult problems in drafting agreements. Moreover, when road portions running through municipalities are excluded, it is, as it were, that the national highways are cut up into pieces. We know the efficiency of the municipalities these days. I am sorry to say that the efficiency of most of the municipalities has deteriorated in the post-Independence period. Would it not be proper, therefore, to include even the portions running through the municipalities in the national highway?

Under clause 4 sub-clause (i) says, "all lands appurtenant thereto whether demarcated or not;" sub-clause (iii) says, "all fences, trees, posts and boundary, furlong and mile stones of such highways or any land appurtenant to such highways." These words, "any land appurtenant to such highways" are included in both the sub-clauses, subclause (i) and sub-clause (iii) of clause 4. I feel that this is an inadvertent repetition and it should not have been properly there. Or, is there some reason which I cannot discover which compelled the framers of this Bill to put these words in both the sub-clauses? I seek clarification only with regard to this.

With these few words, Madam Vice-Chairman, I fully support this measure.

SHRI T. J. M. WILSON (Andhra): Madam Vice-Chairman, though this Bill is a very formal one to regulate and put on the Statute Book what was being done, it removes an anomaly in regard to the grants that were made by the Central Government for these national highways. It is, to my mind, of very great significance that the Central Government steps in formally and

vigorously at a very important and crucial moment of our history, at a time when we are launching upon the reorganisation of States. I believe that the Central Government comes in at this moment very vigorously in order to build a strong network of highways in this country which has a great and potential contribution to make in regard to encouraging the unity of the several units and States of this great country.

There is another reason for which I congratulate the Deputy Minister and that is this. I believe even in the very advanced country as the U.S.A. the Federal Government does not have the full charge of the national highways; rather it pays only a percentage of the cost in the shape of grants to the States. This Government has been doing it for some time and now formally it comes and assumes the entire charge of the highways and bears the full expenditure on the highways. Sir, the size of the country and the present very deplorable condition of the existing highways, what are called provisional national highways before this Bill, should not warrant the very small provision of Rs. 55 crores in the second Five Year Plan; and also in view of the very important and very useful and the very big role that this road transport system has been playing in this country, not in contradiction or in opposition to but in somewhat supplementing the rail transport I believe, this target of 13,800 miles is rather inadequate. We are aware of the very poor condition of the other State and district roads also and I believe the Ministry is aware of the necessity to have a balanced and integrated system of road transport in this country and that the Government would take even more powers not only to pay attention to maintain and develop the national highways but also to pay more attention towards building a better and a much more balanced system of district and provincial roads. The hon. Member who spoke before me laid down certain criteria for determining the nature of the highways. I am not competent to talk about them. He was speaking of cobwebs, the failure of aeroplane engines and all that, but I believe there are certain criteria which the Government of India have in regard to determining the nature of the highways and I believe they are quite sound and I think, as time goes and as our experience increases, they will have many more tests,—namely the roads that connect the capital towns of

the different States and the ports, I mean, such criteria are there—and I hope they will certainly have more experience to fix much sounder criteria, more criteria for determining the national highways. There is also a variety in the rates and in the nature of the tolls and cesses obtaining in the different parts of the country and I hope that the Central Government will take steps to regularize and put on a stable and methodical basis these various tolls and cesses. So far as the delegated legislation of this Bill is concerned, it is very very normal and reasonable and I only want that Government take even more powers in order to take steps to improve the maintenance of the roads.

Sir, I have just another specific point to make. I believe many hon. Members must be knowing that at several points on these highways, where there is heavy cart traffic, the motor vehicles that pass on the road—the roads are supposed to be mainly maintained for the motor vehicles on these highways and at those points the traffic is very heavy—they not only suffer extra wear and tear, not only the pace of the vehicles is reduced, but also there occur a number of very serious accidents due to this very heavy traffic. I, therefore, suggest that the Government may consider and take steps to lay diversion roads for the exclusive use of this cart traffic.

Sir, I have another suggestion to make which concerns my State Andhra. The i Schedule shows a highway connecting \ Poona, Sholapur, Hyderabad and Vijaya-wada and beyond Vijayawada, just 40 miles above, is Masulipatam. It is a very important port to which a large portion of the goods passes from Andhra Pradesh and Hyderabad is going to be the capital of the new Andhra Pradesh and it is right that this capital of the Andhra Pradesh be connected with a very important port in Andhra Pradesh and the only thing involved is another 40 miles. I, therefore, suggest that an extension be made up to Masulipatam, which involves only about 40 miles, and a declaration be made that from Sholapur through Masulipatam it will be a highway.

Thank you very much.

SHRI MAHESWAR NATK (Orissa):
Madam Vice-Chairman, I whole-heartedly support the Bill. The Bill, I must say,

has not come a little too soon and in fact should have come much earlier. Madam, the Nagpur Plan which envisaged a road development programme for twenty years, I am told, has been accomplished to a great extent, and the Ministry deserves congratulations on that score. Of course, it still remains to be seen whether the agricultural area of the country, I mean the rural area in the interior, is going to be brought within a distance of five miles of the main road as envisaged in the Nagpur Plan. Nevertheless, the attention that has been paid for developing the roads during the first Plan period and is to be paid during the next Plan period is certainly a hopeful factor, and in that connection I must say that the Bill now brought before the House is rather too modest. A road mileage of 1,300 and odd miles coming under the national highway scheme is not in consonance with the vastness of the country; neither is it in consonance with the activities that the second Five Year Plan envisages. Looking at the map which has been supplied to us I find that vast tracts, which have not got any inland waterways, neither any railway communication, are still inaccessible and it is much easier and quicker to come from Cape Comorin to Delhi than to reach some interior places much nearer to Delhi or say Cape Comorin. Madam, mineral areas and agricultural areas still remain undeveloped or underdeveloped because of lack of communications and they are going without any means of accessibility as a result of which, speaking from personal experience, I find that vast mineral resources are lying unexplored or, even where they are explored, the commodities do not find their way to the railheads or even to the nearest road, I mean some State roads or some district roads which are in so dilapidated a condition that they are not even jeepable. That is why I think the declaration of more 4 P.M. highways as national highways rather more urgent than the road mileage envisaged by this Bill.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

I do not want to go into the importance of national highways but I want to make certain suggestions in respect of the existing national highways. And taking this opportunity I would like to say that the National Highway No. 6 falling within the jurisdiction of Mayurbhanj District in Orissa has not been given the attention which it deserves. This is the road which connects Calcutta

[Shri Mashewer Naik.]

and Bombay and from that point of view its importance is probably very great. I may tell you that about 1,200 miles from missing links and it is said that about 640 miles of these missing links have already been restored but this portion to which I have referred cannot be said to have received proper attention at the hands of the Government or of the authorities who are in charge there. I see that construction has been going on for the past few years over this portion of the national highway but still there are about 20 miles of this important highway where the road has become such that even the common man's vehicle, the bicycle, cannot negotiate. There are *nalas* and there are rivulets unbridged so that there are many missing links. They should be attended to so that the importance of the road can be restored.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have to finish this Bill at 4-30. There are still three more speakers and some time has to be given to the hon. Minister to reply. So please finish your speech.

SHRI MAHESWAR NAIK: I will be very brief, Sir.

Coming to National Highway No. 5 which is within the jurisdiction of Orissa, it seems that still worse attention has been given to it. That portion which lies between Baripada and Balasore is burdened with very heavy traffic; not only passenger services but also goods services are running to capacity but during the six months of the year when heavy rains are there, this portion of the road remains almost impassable. Numerous ditches, numerous corrugations make the roads impassable even by jeeps.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is only about national highways. We are not concerned with communications in general.

SHRI MAHESWAR NAIK: I am speaking about 'national highways. I am speaking particularly about Highway No. 5 which falls within the jurisdiction of Mayurbhanj district. Going a little farther, there are as many as four big rivers which require to be bridged so that communication between Calcutta and Madras becomes an all-weather one. One of the previous speakers said that consideration should be given to mak-

ing the railway bridges railway-cum-road bridges. If these bridges are made rail-way-cum-road bridges, I think much of the difficulties and much of the financial distress can be overcome.

{Time bell rings.}

One more point, Sir. I have to make another suggestion. The tract of land enclosed by National Highways Nos. 2, 7, 6 and 33 is an extensive stretch of land which is interspersed with hills and mountains. It is said that valuable minerals are there in that region. That is a vast stretch of land and if some existing road or some new road is made into a national highway, starting somewhere at Sambalpur on National Highway No. 6 and connecting it to National Highway No. 2 or No. 7 in the north, I think that will solve a great problem. And I must say that there is no rail communication in that area.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We are not concerned with railways now.

SHRI MAHESWAR NAIK: I am speaking about the highways. So, I will appeal to the hon. Minister to see that this portion is connected with national highways.

SHRI V. C. KESAVA RAO (Andhra): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I thank you very much for giving me some time to speak on this Bill. The Transport Ministry and the Minister concerned really deserve our congratulations. After the national highways have been taken over by the Centre, I must say that the condition of the roads has improved very much. Like the railways, here also there are three classes. The hon. Minister and the Railway Ministry have been thinking of abolishing the third class in the railways. According to me here the third class roads are those roads maintained by the district boards and the second class roads are those roads maintained by the State highways department and the first class roads are those of the Centre.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: What about village roads?

AN HON. MEMBER : They are goods trains.

SHRI V. C. KESAVA RAO: When we are thinking of giving some privileges to the railways and also of abolishing

third class, I think the worst class of roads, the *mofussil* roads, should be improved.

Of course, it will not come under the national highways, but the Central Government is giving some grant for the maintenance and development of the roads and I request the Government to bear in mind that when they are thinking of improving the national highways, they must see that these roads are also properly maintained.

As regards the national highways, if we see the map attached to the Bill, in the northern portion of India there is a net work of railways as well as roads and as we go South either the roads are there or the railway lines are there. I do not know, for centuries together this is going on and nobody has undertaken development of roads in the South. In my State of Andhra, there are only three parallel national highways one on the eastern coast, one in the centre and the third on the western side. If anybody wants to travel from east to west, it is not at all possible. He has to travel about two hundred to three hundred miles extra by train either *via* Bezwada railway station or Madras. I, therefore, request the Government to consider a national highway between Kotapatnam, Kurnool, Belgaum and Kolhapur. That means, that we are connecting the three parallel national highways. If we link up these three parallel highways, it means we will be giving a lot of facilities to the people living in Rayalaseema area as well as the eastern coast.

Another thing is the need to connect Nagarjuna Sagar and that has to be linked up with Hyderabad. Definitely either the State Government or the Central Government has to take the road right up to Nagarjuna Sagar on the Hyderabad side. So, if the Central Government takes up this road right from Hyderabad crossing Kistna river at Nagarjuna Sagar dam then it will connect the national highway connecting Calcutta and Madras somewhere at Nel-lore or Ongole.

Another thing I have to mention is that there are so many minor ports on the east coast. Of course, the national highway is running about twenty miles to ten miles right from Visakhapatnam to Madras but the approach roads are very badly maintained by the State. The people, especially in the ports and people who will be going there and stay-

ing in summer for recreational purposes, are put to difficulty. There are some beaches here where people can enjoy in summer. These approach roads will not be more than about hundred miles or two hundred miles. If all these approach roads can be taken up in the national highway and those roads are maintained by the Central Government, it would be better.

My friend, Mr. Wilson, has mentioned about extending the road from Vijaya-wada to Masulipatam. Masulipatam is a big port and it is essential that the national highway going from Hyderabad and stopping at Bezwada may be extended to Masulipatam also.

As regards planting of trees on both sides of the national highways, an hon. Member here remarked that fruit growing trees should be planted on the roads. I do not think it is advisable. Even now when trees are there, people are indiscriminately cutting away the trees and there is little check on the cutting of these trees. There are some trees, either tamarind trees or neem trees, which are very useful and also giving some income to the Central Government by auctioning the fruits of the neem as well as the tamarind trees.

DR. W. S. BARLINGAY: I do not think tamarind is a useful tree.

SHRI V. C. KESAVA RAO: I do not think one can plant mango trees and also banana trees.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:..Banana trees will not give any shade.

SHRI V. C. KESAVA RAO: And trees like tamarind and neem will be of use and I request the hon. Minister to consider this.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Rajasthan): Sir, I welcome the Bill as far as it goes. I am getting up only to press one point and I have not much to say about this measure. While going through the Schedule, I notice that out of something like fifty highways, as far as Rajasthan is concerned, there is only one national highway provided and that touches only the fringe of Rajasthan—from Delhi to Jaipur, Udaipur and Ahmedabad. As everybody in this House knows, Rajasthan is full of many historical places and there are places which from the tourist • point of view and historical point of view every year hundreds and thousands

[Shri Jaswant Singh.] of foreigners visit, but they are deterred from visiting for the simple reason that there are no proper facilities for travelling. There are no roadways. Then, railways are also very scarce and wherever there are, they are not adequate and satisfactory. Therefore, many of the foreign visitors, who would like to visit the historical places in Rajasthan, from the sport point of view as well as for seeing the historical places, are either inconvenienced or are deterred from going to these places. Moreover, so far as Rajasthan State is concerned, of course, it is doing its best according to its own budgetary position, as well as under the Five Year Plan. But still its resources are very limited and whatever small roadways they construct they are not in a position to maintain. There are hundreds of instances which can be quoted where a road of, say, 50 miles length is constructed by the State Government. By the time—in a year or two—the road is completed, from the other end the road is all destroyed by the traffic. But if a highway connecting this area, places like Jodhpur, Bikaner

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Suggest what is the national highway you want. You please make a suggestion.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: No national highway is provided.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please suggest.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I suggest that from Delhi it can connect Jodhpur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and go along the Pakistan frontier. I am suggesting it from the strategic point of view as well from the point of view of the network of canal system—Rajasthan canals as well as the Bhakra dam canals. Also, to take the railways, there are no railways there and railways will be very costly in view of the nature of the terrain. Therefore, roadways are the only possible way, by which the products of the Bhakra canal area as well as the Rajasthan canals area can be moved and the desert could be opened up from the strategic point of view also. There were several schemes before the country attained independence as well as afterwards. Several schemes were gone into with a view to seeing that the border could be connected with Delhi. And there is the dacoit menace with which we are encountered. Every year hundreds of dacoits from India who have

found their way into Pakistan, raid this part of the country—Bikaner, Jaisalmer and a small part of Jodhpur. But then there are no means by which you can follow these dacoits. So, from this point of view, several schemes were brought into being for constructing big roadways. As I submitted, it is beyond the means of the Rajasthan Government, and even if they construct ordinary roadways, connecting these places, they cannot maintain them. But if there is a national highway connecting Delhi with Jodhpur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, up to Hanumangarh, it would be more valuable to the country as a whole than most of the highways that we see here. Therefore, I submit that from every point of view such highways would be beneficial to the country as a whole, and in Rajasthan many of these historical places would be opened out to the foreigners and tourists visiting the country during winter, and at other times also this opening out of the historical places will be a very useful project if the Government takes it up seriously. Going through the Schedule I see a number of places where highways are to be constructed. I think no harm will befall the country if those highways are left out. But, Sir, if my suggestion is accepted, it would be an asset to the country as a whole.

SHRI VIJ AY SINGH (Rajasthan): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, in welcoming this Bill I associate myself with the previous speakers who have said that the Bill has been brought not a little too soon. In fact we all feel that a Bill of this type should have come before the House long ago. We all talk of political and cultural unity of this country, but this political and cultural unity of the country is not complete so long as we have no effective means of transportation and communication. We know that railways and roads play a very important part in bringing different people together. India is a vast country. In order to promote our national unity construction of roads is very essential. The hon. Minister while introducing this Bill had spoken at length on the virtues and importance of roads. I do not want to dilate upon that, but there are certain points to which I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister. One such point is, as my friend Shri Jaswant Singh from that side has spoken on behalf of the desert portion of our country, we have provided many national highways, but there is not a single national highway which serves the desert portion. The hon. Minister might say that the national highway

that connects Delhi, Jaipur and Udaipur, of course, goes to Rajasthan, but it is not passing through the desert portion. The desert portion consists of Bikaner and Jodhpur division mostly, and there is not a single national highway which is passing through that region. I would, therefore, strongly support Shri Jaswant Singh who has just said that these important towns of Rajasthan should be connected by a national highway. Just as Mr. Bisht said that the hilly areas should be served by* a national highway, so too we from the desert portion have got a claim to make on the Central Government that these desert areas should be served by a national highway.

There are two more suggestions, and then I will resume my seat. One suggestion is this. One of the speakers on that side said that we should not plant trees on the sides of the national highways because those highways will be used for the landing of aeroplanes. Whatever may be the virtue or the value of the suggestion, I would strongly urge that so far as Rajasthan is concerned, the suggestion cannot be accepted. In fact we need afforestation there and I think this should be part of the national highway programme. When the national highways are constructed, along with that afforestation should also be on our list.

The last point which I want to place before the House is that construction of national highways is very important, but their maintenance is equally important. We generally know that nowadays the maintenance of roads is not what it should be. One of the previous speakers said that there were three types of roads: roads maintained by municipalities, roads maintained by State Governments, and roads maintained by the Centre. Of course, the condition of the roads that are maintained by the Centre is far superior. But nevertheless this point has to be borne in mind because it is only when the roads are effective and well maintained they can serve their real purpose.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I should say that today on this very important measure we have had a very enlightened debate. The hon. Members who participated in the debate made very many useful suggestions and points. In the short time that you are pleased to give me I do not think I shall be able to do justice to all the points 5—22 Rajya Sabha/56

made by hon. Members. Even so, I shall try to deal with some of the more important points made.

Sir, my friend Dr. Barling-ay dwelt on the philosophy and principles of the road system. I was going through the Nagpur Report and I find that the eminent engineers who assembled there to draft the Road Plan for the next twenty years did take into consideration all these aspects. An "hon. Member pointed out that we had to go further ahead than what even the Nagpur Plan envisaged. But I should like to say that the engineers who met at Nagpur did take into consideration all future developments that this country was bound to have. They first of all accepted the broad classification of the roads. They divided them into four classes, not three as my hon. friend said. They are: the national highways, the State or provincial highways, the district roads, and the village roads. They defined national highways as main highways running through the length and breadth of the country connecting ports, capitals of Provinces and of large States, including roads required for strategic movements for the defence of the country. Then they proceeded to define the provincial highways as all other main trunk or arterial roads of a Province or State connecting up with the national highways or highways of adjacent Provinces or States. Then they defined the district roads and also the village roads. They called this system as the grid and star system. My friend talked of the cobweb system and he wanted that roads should run parallel to one another and also cut one another at right angles. Sir, perhaps if we write on a clean slate, it may be possible to devise such roads. I was just now looking at the map of the United States of America, the map of what is known as the Inter-State Highway System, which is analogous to our national highway system. There also, except in some places, I do not find the geometrical proportions that the hon. Member envisaged. That is because we don't write on a clean slate, and also we have to take geography into consideration. You just cannot fight hills and rivers. They are there and they will certainly come in your way. You can by-pass them, you can make contrivances by which you can overcome them, but not in a very straight and blunt manner. So, in this star and grid system, the star represents various towns* and "cities, and from the cities roads radiate to market centres, to large towns.

[Shri O. V. Alagesan.]

to villages, and so on and so forth. They are also inter-connected. But they cannot be again connected in a cobweb like manner. The periphery cannot be connected. The stars are places of important towns and these are connected by the national highways or by the State highways or by the district roads. This connecting of the towns is called the grid. This was the broad principle accepted by them. They defined them, they laid down specifications and standards and also various formulae as to how each class of road should be constructed, from where to where, the length of the road in each State, etc. They worked out all these things and they defined all these things. It is not exactly like a cobweb; it is slightly like a cobweb. That is to say, we cannot clear all the cobwebs. Some cobwebs will remain. This was a major consideration and this has been fully taken into account by the authors of the Nagpur Plan.

Then, a point was made by my friend, Mr. Sinha. He posed a question as to how we would reach the targets envisaged in the Nagpur Plan when the target of expenditure is not anywhere near the target of expenditure given in the Nagpur Plan. I have got the figures here, and it is true that when the Nagpur Plan was drawn up, it was expected to cost Rs. 371 crores. At present-day costs, it would almost be double. So, it would come to about Rs. 740 crores or Rs. 742 crores; I do not want to be meticulous about these figures. This is the cost as envisaged in the Nagpur Plan. If we are to reach those physical targets, then the cost would come to about Rs. 742 crores, but what have we spent? They have laid down the length of the national highways to be 21,750 miles or roughly 21,000 miles as I said in my speech, and the cost of making that alone would be Rs. 133 crores at present-day costs, whereas by the end of the second Plan we would have spent only Rs. 89 crores. So, also in regard to State roads, the cost as per the Nagpur Plan is Rs. 593 crores, whereas by the end of the second Plan we would have spent only Rs. 364 crores. That is to say, by adding up these figures, as against Rs. 742 crores, we would have spent only Rs. 453 crores. Certainly, there is a shortfall in expenditure, but physical targets are attained in this way. Certainly, there is no question of attaining it with respect to the national highways. That is understood.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: I could not follow what the Minister said just now.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: I was saying that, as far as the national highway mileage was concerned, we would not be attaining anything like the target envisaged in the Nagpur Plan. Whereas the mileage of national highways in the Nagpur Plan is 21,000 or even more, we would be completing national highways only to the length of 13,800 miles. There is a shortfall here.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: I want to know . . .

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: I am coming to that. Then there are State roads. There, we will be able to reach the length envisaged in the Nagpur Plan. The Nagpur Plan envisaged a length of 1,01,250 miles for hard-surfaced roads, and by the end of the second Plan we would be having 1,11,200 miles. With respect to unsurfaced roads, the target envisaged in the Nagpur Plan is 2,08,000 miles, and we would be having at the end of the second Plan 2,07,000 miles. As far as these two categories of roads go, we would be attaining the physical targets aimed at by the Nagpur Plan.

Then, there will remain a large number of bridges, large and small, which would not have been constructed. Even on the national highways, we would have constructed by the end of the second Plan about 93 major bridges. We have already built 33, and during the second Plan we would be completing another 60 major bridges. Even so, there will remain some 54 major bridges in varying stages of construction. The cost relating to this has not been taken into account in the figures given here. So also, there will be bridges, etc. on the State roads which would not have been constructed.

Also under the National Extension Service and Community Projects schemes many rural roads are being constructed, but the cost of these roads has not been taken into account here. So, the difference between these two figures is explained in this way. There will remain a large number of bridges, culverts, etc. which would not have been constructed. Also the cost of the rural roads that are being constructed by the Community Projects and the National Extension Service schemes has not been

taken into account here. I think that explains the position with regard to these figures—the target figures and the actual expenditure figures.

Then, a plea was made for drawing up a master plan by Dr. Barlingay and Mr. Sinha, which will go even beyond the Nagpur Plan. We are not unmindful of this necessity. The Nagpur Plan did not really make a plan. They made a plan on principles, but they really did not make an actual plan taking whole country into account. That is to say, a physical plan was not made by them. Now, we are engaging ourselves in that task of having a regular physical plan for the whole country, call it a master plan—it is a high-sounding phrase—if you like. We are going to have a special officer who will thoroughly go into this question in regard to one or two States first. A questionnaire has already been issued to the various States. They will be asked to tell as to what their ideas of their road system are and then the actual road system which will comprise not only the national highways but the other classes of roads as well, will be mapped out. The idea is, and that has been very clearly laid down by the authors of the national Plan, to develop all these categories of roads in a balanced way. One system of roads should not develop at the cost of the other. They have to develop in a balanced way. So, we will have a fully mapped out road system in India which will facilitate our proceeding with further plans for the improvement of the road system of India as a whole. So, that need has already been taken into account.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: By what time will this plan be ready?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : That is a very usual question but I am unable to answer straightaway, how long we will take to actually do this job. It should not be very long. It should be available for planning, well in time, for at least the third plan.

Then the question was raised of adding more mileage to our national highway system. I have already in my opening speech said, why it is not possible for us to add more to the mileage of the national highways. The main question is finance. We really wanted much more than the Rs. 55 crores that has been allotted to us. Originally, the picture looked rosier and we thought we would

get much more than what this Rs. 55 crores represented. Then the Planning Commission had to take, naturally, other aspects also into consideration and the resources allotted have now been reduced to Rs. 55 crores. It is just not possible to increase the mileage with this meagre provision but I should like to say that by the end of the second Plan, the entire national highway system will have, what is called, fully asphalted one-lane carriageway. In addition to that, we will also have a two-lane carriageway extending to 2,000 miles. As far as bridges go, as I have already said, 33 bridges have already been completed. 60 will be completed during the second Plan period and work on 54 major bridges will be in progress. So, this is the utmost that we can expect now. Surely, It is not as if we are going to stop with 13,800 miles. Even to reach the Nagpur target we have to go up to 21,000 or 22,000 miles. We are prepared to extend the national highway system but that will have to wait for the third Plan and it cannot be realized during the second Plan period.

Then mention was made of strategic routes and border roads. We are not unmindful of the importance of these roads. Shri I. S. Bisht wanted the national highways to pass through the Himalayan ranges. It is a very tempting idea to have roads crossing all the Himalayan ranges and connecting all places in the Himalayas but it is not so easy as is imagined. We have got the experience of some roads under construction on the Himalayan ranges. Take for instance the road to Badrinath, sufficient grant or aid has been promised and given. The Uttar Pradesh Government has been pushing the work on, but they take enormously long time to build and the river crossings present a very difficult problem and it is not as easily built as is imagined. Even so, after the Five Year Plan began, we incorporated into the national highway system the road leading to Jammu and Srinagar and then on up to the border at Uri and on this road we are constructing a huge tunnel, the like of which has not been taken up before. It will provide two tubes, one tube for traffic in each direction and the first tube is expected to be opened very shortly. This is a very huge work that we have undertaken and this certainly will go to serve or cater to our strategic needs as well as our defence needs. There are other roads also on the border region which we have

[Shri O. V. Alagesan.]

taken up and which we are fully financing and work on those roads also is going on but not at a very rapid rate because of the inherent difficulties in constructing roads in mountainous regions.

Then the point was made that the customs and excise duty on petrol has increased but the contribution has remained at two and a half annas. It was two and a half annas in 1931 and all this quarter of a century it has remained so. This question was gone into by the Taxation Enquiry Commission and they have recommended that there should be a further contribution of four and a half annas which should go into an All India Rural Communication Fund. We were much attracted by the idea. We thought that it was the only way; if we should have a satisfactory system of rural communication in this country, the only way is to create some such fund and to finance the building of rural communications from that fund. It will not be subject to the fluctuations of the State finance. We thought that it was the only way to have "a satisfactory system of road linking up our rural areas, villages etc. but that did not find favour—I am not blaming anybody—with the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry. They said that this cut across the priorities that had been arranged under the Plan. I myself could not understand how it cuts across, if by this means we can provide for a long time to come, for a continuous planning and construction of a road system which will cater to our rural needs. I myself don't see how that cuts across the priorities. In fact one major need will have been satisfied and we can proceed to look after other developmental aspects of the country. Of course, for the moment, we have to leave it there but we propose to take it up again and see that sufficient additional contribution is made from the customs and excise duty on petrol so that we bring into existence a fund as envisaged by the Taxation Enquiry Commission.

The idea of Road Board also was mentioned. I don't want to go into it. The present Roads Wing of the Transport Ministry is doing all that is necessary in this connection and it is doing its job very ably and very efficiently. I find in United Kingdom the roads were managed by a large number of local authorities, as many as 2,000 local authorities. That

job was taken over from these local authorities for improvement etc. at least part of it, by what was called the Road Board. And the work of this Road Board was later taken over by the Ministry of Transport in United Kingdom. It is the Ministry of Transport in U.K. that looks after this work. Though a sort of a Road Board functioned here during the war years, it did not function in a very effective way and much result was not produced out of it. So, for the moment, I think the Roads Wing of the Transport Ministry should be able to handle this job and handle it well.

I myself was taken up by the idea of planting trees, but many hon. Members seem to have frowned on green trees and this question will most certainly be gone into.

Another point raised was that the railway bridges should be decked and utilised for road traffic as well. We went into this question at some length and we found that it is not a very convenient way of doing things. In many cases we found it easier and more convenient and it took less time, to construct another road bridge instead of going and tampering with the existing railway bridge. Moreover, our railway traffic is increasing by leaps and bounds and any provision for allowing road traffic on railway bridges only hinders and comes in the way of railway movement. So the decking of railway bridges for the purpose of road traffic is a clumsy method and I do not think we should go in for decking the railway bridges for the purpose of moving road traffic.

Shri Kishen Chand wanted to know whether a general road tax is to be levied. It is our intention not to levy any such tax. There will not be any tolls, we have said. There should not be any tolls on the national highways.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND : When the national highway passes through a municipality what happens ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : Of course, it is the right of the municipality to ...

SHRI KISHEN CHAND : So, when the national highway passes through several cities, every city will levy a toll.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : Under the Constitution, the municipalities have the right to levy octroi, etc. But the arrangement that we have come to as a result

of discussions in the Transport Advisory Council is that octroi goods in transit which pass through the municipality should not be charged, that they should be charged only a nominal fee. Somebody may be asked to accompany the goods vehicle and the vehicle allowed to pass instead of being delayed for the purpose of levying octroi.

Then my hon. friend Shri B. K. P. Sinha pleaded for the taking over of the bits that fall within the municipal areas, for direct maintenance and development. Well, we have not done this. We have excluded municipalities with 20,000 and more of population. The road bits that fall within these areas are excluded from the national highway system. That is because these bits that pass through these municipal areas pass through very heavily congested areas, and they really retard movement and the easy flow of traffic is obstructed. So, it will not be any good taking these road bits. We have, however, addressed a circular to all the State Governments saying that we should be prepared to maintain these municipal links under certain conditions until such time as we are able to make regular by-passes outside the municipalities or by-passes within the municipal limits with parallel service roads etc. We have received replies from certain States and the replies from the other States are awaited. As soon as replies are received, we will be able to take a decision on this matter of temporarily maintaining even the portions of the national highways passing through the municipal areas with populations of 20,000 and more.

Sir, many hon. Members pleaded for certain roads in their areas to be incorporated into the national highway system. I do not want to go individually into all those cases. The hon. Member from Orissa, Shri Maheswar Naik, pleaded for the improvement of the national highways that fall within Orissa State. All these things, I can say, have been fully taken up and they will be completed during the Second Five Year Plan. Also it was pleaded on behalf of the Rajasthan area, the desert area, that there should be national highways. As it is, they are not without roads. There are other highways passing through this area. It may not be possible to have national highways covering all the regions for the reasons that I have mentioned before.

fi _99 Pa. Vj Kahha/Sfi

I think I have almost finished what I had to say.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA : What about the question of asphalt manufacture ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : That will be taken up by the oil refineries. They were told that we might need as much as 1,50,000 tons per year. At that time the demand was only for 75,000 tons. That was accepted and they were asked to proceed on that basis. But now it has far exceeded that and now the demand has gone up to two lakh tons. The oil refineries, I am told, are looking into this aspect of manufacturing the asphalt that will be needed.

There are some more points, Mr. Deputy Chairman, but I do not want to take more time of the House. I am sincerely thankful to hon. Members who have made such a wonderful contribution to this discussion.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore) : Just one point, Sir. What about the strength of the bridges that are going to be constructed on these national highways ? As the hon. Minister is fully aware, the team of American experts who visited India had suggested that a measure of relieving the congestion on the railways, the traffic should be diverted on to the roads by means of big lorries and trucks. But the present bridges are not able to stand such big loads. So, they have suggested that the new bridges should be built with strength enough to take the load of such heavy carriers. So, I would like to know whether this question has been taken into consideration.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : The new bridges that are being constructed, I think, can take the loads that are envisaged. But there are certain weak bridges which cannot take the load that may have to pass on them. Such of these weak bridges are being strengthened. More than that I am not able to go into at present.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the declaration of certain highways to be national highways and for matters connected therewith, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Now we take up the clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

Amendment No 2, given notice of by Mr. Bisht, is out of order. And amendment No. 3 is consequential and so is also out of order.

This Bill seeks only to declare the national highways. It is not for the construction of new national highways. So, what hon. Member wants is beyond the scope of this Bill. So, both the amendments are out of order. And since the amendments are ruled out, there are no amendments. And so. . . .

SHRI J. S. BISHT : May I make one appeal to the hon. Minister ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : But this matter comes in the State List.

SHRI J. S. BISHT : I will only appeal to him to have at least a survey conducted. I am not asking for any new road to be constructed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : But it is in the State List.

SHRI J. S. BISHT : Only links have to be put in. He can have a survey.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : There are no roads. He wants a new road constructed in all these places.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : And it is in the State list.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : He wants new roads connecting all these places that he has mentioned. There are no roads existing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes, new roads he wants. So, as I said, there are no amendments.

Clauses 2 to 10, and the Schedule were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Title and the Enacting Formula were added to the Bill.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Sir, I move :

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Bill be passed."

SHRI J. S. BISHT : Sir, just one minute.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes, one minute each.

SHRI J. S. BISHT : Sir, the hon. Minister for Food has seen the whole of the Kumaon area. Probably, the hon. the Deputy Minister has not got the whole idea. There are already big motorable roads traversing the Kumaon Hills. There is, for instance, national highway No. 22 connecting Ambala, Kalka, Simla, Narkanda, Rampur and Chini and proceeding to the border between India and Tibet near Shipki-La. Similarly, we have roads in Gharwal, in Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir. But all these lines are cut across and the links have to be filled up. So, you may appoint some special officer to go into the practicability of it, whether they can be linked up through all these valleys.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA : Sir, I am very happy my hon. friend has explained to us what would be achieved out of the Nagpur Plan during the Second Five Year Plan. I find that the Planning Commission have stated that the Nagpur Plan will be completely implemented. So, I would welcome it if the hon. Minister would give us a statement on the basis of the statement that he has made in this House, a comparative statement of the Nagpur Plan, what were the physical targets they had anticipated, the different classes of roads, bridges and culverts and all that, what has been achieved so far and what are likely to be achieved by 1960-61, along with the financial aspects of the question, the targets and the financial estimates and the financial expenditure that might be made. If he distributes this statement to us, it will help us to take up this important question when we consider the Report of the Planning Commission in this House. I will be obliged if he sends me a corrected copy of the statement he has made.

SHRI O. V.

: I shall be prepared to give the statement.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is :

"That the Bill be passed." The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Friday, the 31st August 1956.