

CALLING ATTENTION
TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE

REPORTED ARMED ROBBERY IN CANARA
BANK MAHARANI BAGH BRANCH, NEW
DELHI.

PROF. RUP CHAND PAL (Hooghly): I call the attention of the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:—

“Reported armed robbery in the Canara Bank, Maharani Bagh Branch, New Delhi, on 21st February, 1982”.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMEN-TARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. VENKA-TASUBBAIAH): Sir, There was a dacoity in the Branch of Canara Bank Situated in Maharani Bagh at about 12.30 p.m. on Sunday the 21st February, 1982. This Branch works on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. At about 12.30 p.m. 4½ persons carrying firearms forced their entry pushing aside the chowkidar. They ordered the employees of the bank to collect in a corner and face the wall. At pistol point they obtained the keys of the strong room from where they collected an amount of Rs. 10,78,880. They escaped in a sky blue Fiat car bearing No. DEB 57 which they burnt in a secluded lane in the nearby Kalandi residential colony; and escaped in another car already parked there.

The Police Control room was informed about this incident at 12.44 p.m. and the first police party reached the spot by 12.49 p.m. The SHO with his staff also reached the bank followed by the DCP and other Senior officials including the Commissioner and the Additional Commissioner. The Lt. Governor also visited the site a little later.

The Delhi Police alerted the border posts and the U. P. and Haryana Police to keep a watch for the car. A case was registered at P. S. Srinivas-puri and is being investigated. Police parties have been sent to different places to check certain leads.

Vigorous efforts are being made to apprehend the culprits.

PROF. RUP CHAND PAL: Sir the bank dacoity that took place on Sunday last at Maharani Bagh is a daring daylight dacoity and the method followed by the armed dacoits reminds us of the Texas story which has been written about the dacoities and armed robberies in certain parts of America and other places.

Sir, it was a 10-minute operation and the armed dacoits escaped with more than Rs. 10 lakhs by slapping the watchman, the cashier and the Manager.

12.13 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

Sir, it is not the first incident of this tyue. In the recent past, three such daring dacoities, if not more, took place only in South Delhi, the first one at a nationalised bank, the Bank of India, Greater Kailash Branch, and the second at a branch of the same Canara Bank in South Extension.

Sir, dacoity is not a new thing in Delhi. Delhi, of late, has begun to be described as the capital in the crime map if India and very often, on many occassions, we have discussed many things about the law and order situation in Delhi itself. But the new thing here is that the operation was meticulously planned and a “cover” car was used and the other car was burnt in such a manner that it is a pointer to new thing that are coming up in respect of dacoities. A routine answer and stock reply has been given by the hon. Minister. If the

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Minister ultimately says that the bank dacoity is an international phenomenon there is nothing to be amazed with. Because when the inflation was discussed, it was said it was an international phenomenon. If you want to discuss corruption, it is said that it is an international phenomenon. If you now try to discuss the Maharani Bagh Bank Dacoity, it may be said so. I do not know.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is an all-India phenomenon.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: (Ponnani): There is a foreign hand in looting the banks now!

PROF. RUPCHAND PAL: Yes, You must try to find out.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Prof. Rupchand Pal, it is including West Bengal.

PROF. RUPCHAND PAL: No sir. If you see the statistics, the amount recovered by the police is really praise-worthy.

This is amazing that only one watchman or only one security guard was there with a simple wooden pole to protect the bank and to look after its security. Sir, in view of the statement made by the hon. Minister, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the banks have not adhered to the security measures suggested by Delhi Police itself? Is it not a fact that a circular was issued by Delhi Police in November last following a bank robbery in South Delhi and the banks were asked to appoint plain-clothed policemen who had sophisticated arms and banks were also asked to fix grill doors and install alarm system? How is it that even after that circular, the authorities did not adhere to that? Or is it a fact that the bank authorities approached the police repeatedly to sanction arms licences to the watchmen to implement certain recommendations of the authorities regarding alarm system and direct line between police and others?

Is it not a fact in view of just what I have mentioned that the senior manager of the said bank that was looted on Sunday wrote a letter to the Central authorities several months ago that a licence for gun for the security guard be given? And the details were sought in this connection and were provided by the bank authorities. But still no gun licence was provided to the security guard.

In the story, we find many things that the car was used with such and such number plate in which they came and it was of such and such colour and actually the number plate used was DEB 57. All these things have come out in the newspaper. How far is this true, I do not know. But still when the checkpoints were alerted, a peculiar thing happened. Though the checkpoints were alerted regarding the number DEB 57, even when the police knew that this was a fake number and this could not be the number by which the dacoits could escape or pass into any other country-side or neighbouring State. Was there any mis-coordination? Was it intentional, deliberate or it was a lapse? If it was a lapse, the responsibility will have to be fixed and what has been done in this respect by the Government?

In this connection, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Confederation of Bank Officers' organisations have come out with certain suggestions to check or prevent bank dacoities. Firstly, there is a suggestion that there should be liberal sanctions of arms licences to Bank Officers. Secondly, the photographs of known anti-social persons or those involved in bank dacoities in the past, but now on bail or freed by the court later on should be provided to the Bank authorities. Thirdly, there should be a direct link between the Bank and the local police as also the mobile police patrol during banking hours. If such suggestions have been given, I want to know what steps the Government have taken in this regard.

There are already certain safety measures suggested by the R.B.I. which are to be taken by the Bank authorities when the Bank money is being carried from one branch to another. Again, when a new branch is being opened, there are certain things to be enquired into and certain aspects to be taken into account. Arms licences should always be provided and security guards should always be armed. We are always feeling proud that we have come up in science and technology. Can the Government not provide an alarm system in the Banks so that as and when there is any chance of looting or dacoity taking place in the Bank, an alarm system may be used? Also, there should be a time schedule for the opening and closing of the strong room and there should also be a provision for automatic electric doors.

These are the suggestions that have come up. I do not know whether the Government has considered all these suggestions. Why I am asking all these things, as to whether anything has been done in respect of these suggestions, is because the people have started thinking that there is a pattern in all those dacoities. As it has come out in the newspapers, if we analyse only these three Banks dacoities which have taken place in a few months in South Delhi itself, we can find a pattern and this pattern is coming up. So much money is being spent by the Home Ministry to safeguard the interests of the people. But we find that one after another bank dacoity it taking place and nothing has come out. I want to know from the hon. Minister what has happened to the first Bank dacoity? Has anyone been arrested? What about the second bank dacoity in which Rs. 6.5 lakhs were involved, in the Canara Bank, South Extension Has anyone been arrested?

In view of all these bank dacoities taking place in alarming proportion particularly in Delhi, may I know what positive steps the Government

propose to take immediately? In this context, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many dacoities have taken place during the period 1980-81 and 1981-82 (upto this period) in Delhi itself, how many persons have been arrested, what is the amount of money involved and how much has been recovered by the police?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I will start by saying that the hon. Member has asked whether this is also due to international phenomena.

It may be All-India phenomenon that according to statistics, West Bengal tops the list in the matter of bank dacoities. But I do not want to go into those details now.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You say that even if it takes place in West Bengal, it is bad. There is no harm in making that statement.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: Wherever it takes place, including in West Bengal, it is bad. That is what I have said.

(Interruptions)

PROF. RUP CHAND PAL: Now we are discussing about the incident that took place in Delhi itself.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY (Calcutta South): West Bengal is a nightmare to them. They cannot forget West Bengal.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: But, it is not a nightmare for dacoits.

Another point which is raised is about the licence that has been sought for and that there has been a delay.

No such licence has been asked for and there is no question of delay in granting the licence.

The Federation made certain suggestions and the Hon. Member has enumerated some of the suggestions that were made. They have been received recently and these are under

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the active consideration and examination by the Banking Division of the Ministry of Finance. The next question was why only a particular Number has been indicated to the check-posts?

I have give in my statement the chronology of events that have taken place with regard to this bank robbery in Maharani Bagh.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (New Delhi): Is it a robbery or a dacoity?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: It is a robbery or dacoity, whatever it may be. It may be a dacoity.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can you distinguish the difference in meaning between 'robbery' and 'dacoity'?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I can, if you allow me to do so.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will have a separate discussion on this.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: According to the details of the case which I have given just now, the incident is reported to have taken place between 12.30 hrs. and 12.38 hrs. Intimation was given to the Control Room at 12.44 hrs. Police arrived at 12.49 hrs. The next question was why only that particular Number was given when the Police made an enquiry there on the spot.

They said that the people came in a particular car and they committed the crime and ran away. So, immediately Police had taken action to alert the Police at the border and Check-post also in various Control Rooms that such and such a car has committed a dacoity. People know that car. Only after some time when the alert was made from one Control Room, we got information

that in a particular lane, a car bearing the same number was burning. So these people and the Policemen went there and they made an enquiry. By the time the enquiry was made and the local people were interrogated, only then, they came to know that there was a car waiting at the site. This particular car bearing that particular Number has been burnt and so it is not a question of complacency on the part of the Police because they never knew. They came after some time and found that this car had been abandoned in a lane and it was burnt and the dacoits had gone away in a particular car.

PROF. RUP CHAND PAL: What is the distance between the bank and the place where that car was left?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I am not able to tell you at this time. It took them another 15 to 20 minutes; by the time they got the information that a car bearing that particular number was burning, they went there; immediately they reached that place; that must have taken them five to ten minutes; and then the interrogation. I understand it is one kilometre from the bank. They made all these enquiries and then it was made known to them through cross-examination people that they had gone in a different car. It was not a deliberate thing on the part of the police to mention only that particular car. When information came to them, the first thing they did was, they alerted all the control rooms and also check-posts and they specifically mentioned that car because the people on the spot said that in that particular car bearing that number those people had sped away. There was no complacency, nor was there any deliberate act, on the part of the police in this case.

Another problem he has mentioned is about certain steps that are to be taken. We had a sort of discussion with the bank authorities and the

Banking Division about the safeguards to be taken, the precautionary measures that have to be undertaken to see that such thing do not recur. The hon. Member is correct when he has said that the Deputy Commissioner of Police has addressed a letter to the banking authorities. Various points came to be discussed in that. There are at present 35,000 branches of commercial banks in the country and posting of armed guards in each of them would mean employment of 1,40,000 on the basis of four guards per branch; the expenditure will come to something like Rs. 140 crores per annum. This is the financial constraint that was discussed in that meeting. That is why the suggestion was made that banks may have a selective approach of posting of armed guards in sensitive and vulnerable points, especially where there are significant cash holdings. Apart from the financially prohibitive aspect of the matter, posting of armed guards also does not ensure the safety of lives of the employees or customers. The experience of the banks has been that, wherever there was resistance, there have been injuries to or even deaths of bank employees or armed guards themselves or customers. Out of the five cases where thefts have taken place, three were in branches where armed guards were present. This is also one hazard which has been discussed in that meeting.

This particular bank the Canara Bank, has discussed this matter and they have come to a decision that, at least in their branches which are in the north, these armed guards have to be provided. That was the recent decision made by the Canara Bank management. In vulnerable branches, specially those having lot of cash balances, it was decided that armed guards should be provided. The other decisions taken include installing of electronic alarm system which the hon. Member has pointed out and branches observing holidays on the same day when markets are

closed—on a day other than Sunday. These are some of the decisions that have been taken in order to see that such dacoities do not take place.

About the Canara Bank also I have mentioned as to what decisions they have taken in the matter.

As regards the other points which the hon. Member raised, namely, about the dacoities that took place in South Delhi—especially he mentioned about three dacoities that took place in Delhi—I am told, last year there was a dacoity that took place and in the previous year, two dacoities took place—as pointed out, we are making vigorous efforts.

Regarding the dacoities that have taken place in September 1981, the police are taking all the necessary steps. There are reasonable chances of finding out or identifying the culprits and bringing them to book. All these efforts are being made in this connection.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He wanted to know as to how many of them have been arrested.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: Investigation is going on. So, at this juncture it is not in public interest nor is it in the interest of successful investigation of the case to supply all the details since the culprits may have a chance to escape on the way.

I have already said about the dacoities that took place last year I said that vigorous investigation is going on. We are taking all possible steps in this regard.

As regards safety measures, we are in constant touch with the banking authorities to see that such vulnerable places are properly guarded. We

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have taken all possible steps in this connection. There is, therefore, no complacency or any sort of indifference on the part of the Government.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no other way of replying.

प्रो० अजित कुमार मेहता (समस्तीपुर) : मुझे प्रसन्नता है कि मंत्री महोदय ने यह नहीं कहा है कि यह वर्ल्ड वाइड फिनोमिना होने के कारण घटना घटी है --

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I did not say that. Perhaps I was not able to express myself.

PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA (Samastipur): I express my happiness that you did not express that.

अभी मंत्री जी ने कहा कि वैस्ट बंगाल सर्वोपरि है बैंक डकैतियों के मामले में। यह हो सकता है लेकिन कुछ आंकड़े मैं देना चाहता हूँ। वैस्ट बंगाल में डकैतियों की 1403 घटनाएं हुई हैं और राबरी की 1346, बिहार में राबरी की 2793 और डकैतियों की 1578। उत्तर प्रदेश में डकैतियों की 6575 और राबरी की 7496। महाराष्ट्र में 3208 राबरीज की घटनाएं घटी हैं। दिल्ली को ही आप लें। 21 दिसम्बर, 1981 को जल्थेदर संतोख सिंह की हत्या हुई। उसके तीन दिन पहले कूचा खन सिंह में एक व्यापारी सत्तर वर्षीय हकूमत राय, उनकी साठ वर्षीय पत्नी श्रीमती केसरी देवी और उनके अठारह वर्षीय पोते प्रमोद की हत्या हुई और लूटपाट की घटना हुई। कुतुब मीनार पर दिल दहला देने वाली घटना भी यहां पर घटी थी। यह सब काम करने वाली सरकार के नाक के ठीक नीचे हुआ है। यही इसकी तस्वीर है। होम-मिनिस्टर समझते हैं कि एक

पुलिस कमिश्नर को बदल देने से उनके कर्तव्य की इतिश्री हो गई। पुलिस कमिश्नर को बदल देने से ही सारी व्यवस्था क्या सुधर जाएगी।

पिछले साल की घटनाओं पर अगर दृष्टिपात करें तो आप देखेंगे कि दिल्ली में ही नहीं बल्कि सारे देश में कमोबेश यही व्यवस्था थी। पुलिस पर ही इसका सारा दोष लाद दिया जाए मैं ऐसा नहीं मानता हूँ। व्यवस्था सुधारने की जिम्मेदारी पुलिस की होती है। किन्तु व्यवस्था बिगड़ती है पुलिस और अपराधियों का जब राजनीतिज्ञों के साथ सांठगांठ हो जाता है। पिछले दिनों दिल्ली में भी कुछ ऐसी घटनाएं प्रकाश में आयी हैं जिन में राजनीतिज्ञों के साथ अपराधियों की सांठगांठ की बात सामने आयी है। इस घटना को लीजिए, लगता है कि जैसे बम्बेया फिल्म का दृश्य देख रहे हों। हवाई फायर हुआ, 5 डकैत मुख्य दरवाजे से शस्त्रहीन चौकीदार को ढकेलकर भीतर घुसे, अफसरों को चपताया और खजाने में घुसकर 10 लाख रु० लेकर बाहर आये और गाड़ी में बैठ गये। आधा किलोमीटर चलने के बाद उस गाड़ी को आग लगा दी और दूसरी गाड़ी से भाग गए। मैं समझता हूँ कोई चमत्कार ही होगा यदि आप इस मशीनरी से इन अपराधियों का पता लगा सकेंगे। क्या आप बतायेंगे कि देश में जितनी डकैती की घटनाएं होती हैं उन में से कितनों का आप पता लगा सके हैं, कितनी धनराशि रिकवर करने में आप सफल हुए हैं? अगर आंकड़े इकट्ठा करें तो मालूम होगा कि सारा इन्वेस्टीगेशन बेकार होता है, कुछ परिणाम नहीं हाथ लगता। घटनाएं हुईं, पुलिस और दूसरे अधिकारी लोग यहां भी पहुंच गए। अगर किसी व्यक्ति के घर में यह घटना हुई होती तो पुलिस वाले वहां पहुंच कर उस व्यक्ति को भी

तंग करते। लेकिन यह तो बैंक की बात है, तुरन्त सब लोग पहुंच गए। लेकिन हुआ क्या? अखबारों में छपा, संसद में आज चर्चा हो रही है और सब लोगों ने कहा है कि इस तरह की घटनाएं नहीं होनी चाहिए। अगर जिस रफ्तार से यह घटनाएं हो रही हैं उस से तो यही लगता है कि कुछ दिनों के बाद बैंक डकैती और बड़ी-बड़ी डकैतियों की घटनाएं गिरहकटी जैसी मामूली घटनाएं हो कर रह जायेंगी। लोग उसी तरह से अभ्यस्त हो जायेंगे, चर्चायें होंगी दो, चार दिन और उसके बाद कर्तव्य की इतिथी।

आप ने बताया कि जून और सितम्बर में डकैती की घटनाएं हुईं और अभी तक किसी को नहीं सुलझा पाये। मैं पूछता हूं फिर इतनी बड़ी पुलिस मशीनरी किस लिए है? यह घटना भी नहीं सुलझा सकी है। क्या सारी पुलिस इसीलिए है कि जनआन्दोलन को दबा दिया जाये। अपराधियों का पता लगाने के लिए नहीं। आपकी सारी पुलिस मशीनरी और गृह विभाग इसीलिए चल रहा है कि जनआन्दोलनों को दबाया जाय, और कोई काम इनका नहीं है। ऐसा ही प्रतीत होता है।

मैं समझता हूं कि शायद गृह मंत्री अभी तक यह नहीं जानते होंगे कि वह गाड़ी जो चली है और जिस गाड़ी पर डकैत लोग भागे हैं उनके मालिक कौन थे। पिछले साल जून में ग्रेटर कैलाश कालोनी में यूनाइटेड बैंक में इसी तरह की घटना हुई। आप देखें हम लोग जो नान-टेक्नीकल हैं वह भी जानते हैं कि दोनों का मोडस आपरेन्डी ऐक्सा ही लगता है। महारानी बाग में जो घटना हुई उस दिन वहां का बाजार बन्द था। ग्रेटर कैलाश में जो घटना हुई वहां

का भी बाजार उस दिन बन्द था, शायद मंगलवार था। और अपराधियों के वर्णन से पता लगता है कि ग्रेटर कैलाश कालोनी में जो लोग थे वही शायद वहां भी हैं क्योंकि मोडस आपरेन्डी दोनों का एक ही लगता है। इसके बावजूद भी पुलिस को पता लगाने में इतने दिन लग गए। आखिर इसका क्या कारण हो सकता है? क्या इस में किसी तरह का कोई पडयंत्र होगा, कोई मिली भगत हो सकती है, इस पर आपको ध्यान देना होगा। पिछले दिनों दूसरे सदन में मंत्री महोदय ने बताया कि पिछले साल 40 बैंक डकैतियां हुई हैं और इस साल जनवरी तक कुल 45 हुईं। इन 45 डकैतियों में क्या गृह मंत्री जानते हैं कि कितने मामले सुलझाये गये अभी तक? आपने आंकड़ा दिया कि पिछले साल सितम्बर में जो डकैती हुई, उस के बारे में अभी अनुसंधान जारी है, पता नहीं यह अनुसंधान कब तक जारी रहेगा, 1985 तक अनुसंधान ही करते रहेंगे, फल उस के बाद आयेगा?

इस सारे संदर्भ में मैं प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूं कि पश्चिमी देशों में जो बैंकों के सुरक्षात्मक उपाय बनाये गये हैं, वे सुरक्षात्मक उपाय क्या भारतवर्ष में भी अपनाए जायेंगे? स्टेट बैंक आफ इंडिया, जिस की करीब 5 हजार शाखाएं हैं, सब से बड़ा बैंक है, क्या यह बैंक इन सुरक्षात्मक उपायों को अपनाने में अगुवायी करेगा?

बैंक में नकद राशि रखने सम्बन्धी नियम का क्या कड़ाई से पालन होता है, अगर नहीं होता है, तो उसके सम्बन्ध में क्या उपाय करने जा रहे हैं?

तीसरा प्रश्न मेरा इस सम्बन्ध में यह है कि वैसी ही घटना जब दिल्ली में पहले

[प्रो० अजित कुमार मेहता]

हो चुकी थी, तो कनारा बैंक का चौकीदार उस दिन भी खाली हाथ क्यों था? बढ़ती हुई बैंक डकैतियों की घटनाओं को देखते हुए, और इस तरह की घटनाएं दक्षिण दिल्ली में पहले भी हो चुकी हैं, तो वंसी स्थिति में जब कि उस दिन बाजार बन्द था, चौकीदार निहत्था क्यों था?

(व्यवधान)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are three more Members, Prof. Mehta. Please give them some time also; you should not exhaust everything.

PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA: I have got only these questions, Sir. I have concluded.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I will confine myself only to the points which have been raised in regard to this incident of dacoity which has taken place, which is the subject under discussion now. He referred to crimes and other things in other parts of the country and so on. Sir, these are various details. If an appropriate question is put, then, it will be answered. I do not want to waste the time of the House now to go into these details. I will confine myself only to the subject under discussion. The hon. Member said that in some western countries certain security measures have been devised and he asked us whether we are going to introduce such things here in our country. Well, Sir, I have already stated in my statement earlier that we are having discussions with the Banking Division and with the Banks regarding the introduction of the Electronic system, about the Walkie-talkie and so on. We are going into the details as to what effective steps can be taken. These matters are under active examination of the Government, in consultation with the Banking Division, as well as with the Banks concerned in the country. I agree with the hon. Minister.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member..

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: Hon. Member,—I am sorry.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: There is no Minister here. It is only your privilege.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: A slip of tongue also may make him a Minister sometimes! Who knows?

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: I am happy he has told on the future, that in future, a Minister can be there from this side; let them also join us here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sometime back I saw in the papers that he would become Chief Minister; therefore he is addressing him as Minister.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: Sir, if I come to that side, I will be in very good company of Mr. Satyasadhan Chakraborty, because, at no point of time is there any hope of his coming on this side. I will find it a good company there.

He referred also to the State Bank which is a major Bank in this country. It is also under active consideration as to what steps are required to be taken to provide them with the latest gadgets and electronic equipments. Then, financial constraints are also there. All these things are being discussed threadbare.

About keeping the Cash, already detailed instructions have been given to the various branches of the banks as to how money has to be kept. There are security measures. There is a safe provided and the cash has to be put in a very safe place. There is no lapse on this account.

The chowkidar is a bank employee. As I have said, these dacoities have taken place in South Delhi. The Canara Bank management has already said that in such cases, especially in Northern India and Delhi, they are

having a proposal to arm the santry or the chowkidar in these vulnerable places. And I hope a decision will be taken soon on the lines suggested by some hon. Members.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA (Tamiluk): Sir, within a very short spell of time, three bank robberies have taken place in South Delhi alone and none of the culprits involved in these incidents have been arrested so far. This is the picture and position of the capital of our country. This causes a great anxiety among the people. The hon. Minister was speaking about West Bengal. Let me explain some facts to the House. During the year 1979, the police in West Bengal was able to recover Rs. 22.51 lakhs which were looted by the dacoits in that year and 25 persons were arrested. I can also give the figures of 1980 and 1981.

The idea that giving guns or rifles to the watchmen on duty in the banks will save the banks from such dacoities is not true. Our experience in West Bengal is that in some banks, the rifles given to the Chowkidars were also snatched by the dacoits. Of course, after the incidents took place the West Bengal Police were able to recover those guns and rifles.

I would not like to go into further details. I would only ask some specific questions and would expect specific answers to them.

How many incidents of bank dacoity have taken place in Delhi since 1st January, 1980 and how many culprits have been arrested so far? What is the total amount which has been looted by the dacoits from the banks of Delhi since 1st January, 1980 and how much of that amount has been recovered so far? What are the preventive measures that the Administration has taken from time to time for the security of the banks and with what effect?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: The hon. Member has mentioned about West Bengal. I only in a passing reference said that West Bengal also is not free from this. As a matter of fact, it is not only free but perhaps heads the list. That is what I have said. According to the information we have received, in West Bengal there were 11 incidents of bank dacoity out of 24 in the whole country in 1980; and there were 16 such incidents in 1981 in West Bengal out of 40 in the country. Thus, West Bengal accounts for 40 per cent of the total bank dacoity cases in the country in 1980 and 1981. During the current year upto 21-2-1982, there have been 11 incidents of bank robbery and dacoity in the country, and six of them have occurred in West Bengal.

PROF. RUP CHAND PAL: Have you any knowledge about the fact that some of the arrested persons belonged** (Interruptions).

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I do not allow this question.

PROF. RUP CHAND PAL: All right, Sir.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: This is an insinuation. Whenever there is a dacoity, should I say that it is being done by.**

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He has already withdrawn it; it is not proper.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I have already mentioned about the bank dacoities that have taken place in Delhi. During 1980, there was no bank dacoity or robbery. In 1981, there were 2 and in 1982, it is one. There are the statistics that I wanted to give.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA: How many of them have been arrested?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: The hon. Member also wanted to know, whose car was involved in this dacoity etc. I would like to state on the floor

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of the House that investigations in this case as also in the previous dacoity cases are going on. There are some inter-State dacoits that are operating. These people are not only confined to Delhi.

We cannot expect that only residents of Delhi would do the dacoity in Delhi. It is not like that. They are not controlled by any Citizenship Act or any residential Act. These are inter-state dacoits, that are operating. It takes some time to investigate and I do not want to spell out all those details? It may vitiate the investigations and the culprits may not be brought to book.

PROF. N. G. RANGA (Guntur): It would help the dacoits.

श्री राम स्वरूप राम (गया) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, कैनारा बैंक की जो डकैती हुई वह सचमुच में बहुत दुखद घटना है। आप जानते हैं कि बैंकों का नेशनलाइजेशन प्रधान मंत्री श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी के द्वारा किया गया और आज बैंकों की शाखाएं सारे देश में फैली हुई हैं। हिन्दुस्तान के सभी कोनों में बैंकों की शाखाएं फैली हुई हैं और दिल्ली में इतनी बड़ी घटनाएं घट सकती हैं तो आप सोच सकते हैं कि जो देहाती इलाकों में हमारे नेशनलाइज्ड बैंकों की शाखाएं हैं वे कितनी असुरक्षित हैं। इस का अन्दाजा अपने आप लगाया जा सकता है।

हम यह नहीं कहना चाहते कि बंगाल में कितनी डकैतियां हुईं, उत्तर प्रदेश में कितनी हुईं या बिहार में कितनी हुईं क्योंकि बंगाल की जनता भी प्रधान मंत्री को उतने ही आदर की नजर से देखती है जितने कि उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार या देश के अन्य कोनों की जनता देखती है। इंदिरा गांधी बंगाल के लोगों को भी उतनी ही प्यारी हैं। इसलिए यह नहीं हम कहना चाहते कि बंगाल में

इतनी डकैतियां हुईं, बिहार में इतनी हुईं या और दूसरी स्टेट्स में इतनी डकैतियां हुईं।

कल राज्य सभा में वित्त उपमन्त्री, श्री जनार्दन पुजारी ने जवाब देते हुए बताया कि पिछले साल 40 बैंक शाखाएँ लूटी गईं जिनमें से 16 शाखाएं वेस्ट बंगाल की थीं। इस बात से स्पष्ट पता चलता है कि 40 परसेन्ट बैंक रावरीज बंगाल में हुई हैं।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: We are not discussing about Bengal, Calcutta, but about Delhi.

श्री राम स्वरूप राम : इस बात से स्पष्ट होता है कि वेस्ट बंगाल में ला एण्ड आर्डर की क्या पोजीशन है। वेस्ट बंगाल में मार्क्सवादी पार्टी की सरकार है और वहां पर ला एण्ड आर्डर की क्या पोजीशन है वह वेस्ट बंगाल की जनता और सारा देश जानता है।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Come to the subject proper.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Do you know how many were apprehended by the police? How many of them were arrested? Do you know that? Do you know the figures?

श्री राम स्वरूप राम : मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि डकैती डकैती ही है चाहे वह देश के किसी भी हिस्से में क्यों न हो, वह सारे देश के लिए एक दुःखद घटना है और सरकार को इसे गम्भीरता से लेना चाहिए। उधर के माननीय सदस्यों को इस पर एजिटेटड नहीं होना चाहिए।

सरकार ने अपने बयान में कहा है कि साढ़े बारह बजे यह डकैती हुई और दस मिनट तक डकैती चलती रही। यानी साढ़े बारह बजे कैनारा बैंक में डकैत घुसे और 12 बजकर 40 मिनट तक डकैती करते रहे। 12 बजकर

44 मिनट पर वहां पुलिस पहुंची । इसमें जो टाइम फैक्टर है वह बहुत महत्व रखता है । यदि पुलिस ने अधिक सतर्कता के साथ काम लिया होता और पुलिस काफी एक्टिव रहती तो मैं समझता हूं कैनरा बैंक को लूटने वाले जो डकैत थे वह गिरफ्तार हो जाते और जो लूटेड प्रार्पर्टी थी वह रिकवर हो जाती । मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि पुलिस एक्टिव नहीं थी, निष्क्रिय रही । कहीं कहीं तो पुलिस की कनाइवेंस से भी डकैतियां होती हैं ।

मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी को आगाह करना चाहता हूं कि वे देश की समस्त देहाती और अरबन क्षेत्र की बैंकों की शाखाओं को सुरक्षा देने के लिए एक काम्प्रिहेन्सिव प्लान बनाकर उसको लागू करें वरना आपकी कोई भी बैंक कहीं सुरक्षित नहीं हैं ।

दूसरी बात यह है कि इस तरह की जो घटनायें देश के हर कोने में हुई हैं उनकी जांच की गई है, कोई दोषी पकड़े गए हैं या नहीं, सरकार कभी कार्लिंग अटेंशन के माध्यम से और कभी स्टार्ड क्वेश्चन के माध्यम से यही जवाब देती है कि हम इन्वेस्टिगेशन कर रहे हैं तो उस इन्वेस्टिगेशन या अनुसन्धान का क्या प्रतिफल हुआ, क्या रिजल्ट हुआ, यह सदन के माननीय सदस्यों को कभी मालूम नहीं होता है । हो सकता है श्री वेंकटमुबैया साहब को मालूम होता हो । इस आधार पर मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं क्या सरकार कोई काम्प्रिहेन्सिव रिपोर्ट, इस तरह की जो घटनायें देश में हुई हैं उनके बारे में, इस सदन की मेज पर रखने का विचार रखती है ? और क्या भविष्य में इस तरह की घटनायें देहाती और अरबन क्षेत्र की बैंकों में न घटें, उसके लिए सरकार कोई सख्त कदम उठाने

जा रही है ? यदि हां, तो वे कदम कौन से हैं ?

13-00 hrs.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH:
Because of the historic steps which have been taken by our Prime Minister, the branches have spread far and wide in the country. As I have stated in my statement already,—there are 35,000 branches of commercial banks in the country in the far-flung areas. I have told the House, through you, Sir, about the security measures to be taken, what the financial constraints are, and how many people are to be employed. Suppose they are armed, what will be the repercussions—is it going to help in stopping the dacoits, or will it have an adverse effect, or result in rifles being snatched away, as mentioned by our hon. friend. These are the matters which have to be looked into very carefully, i.e. in far-flung areas, what steps are going to be taken.

We are discussing this matter with the managements of various banks. A suggestion was made to identify certain vulnerable places where there is a possibility of dacoities taking place. Steps are also being taken in this regard.

They said that in West Bengal, 40 per cent of the dacoities have taken place. Naturally, Mr. Ram Swaroop Ram asked that when 40 per cent of the dacoities have taken place in West Bengal alone, whether that does not reflect on the administration, whereas less dacoities have been there in other places—in Delhi, 2 or 3. That is a matter on which the State Government will take all necessary steps to see that these things are properly maintained.

About dacoities which have taken place in other places, we have to get the necessary information from them. Whatever information is available, has been given to the House. About action taken, and what is the result of the investigation he asked me a question—whether a comprehensive report

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will be placed on the Table of the House. At this point of time, I will not be able to give any answer. If any specific question is put in this connection, we will consider it.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani): It is a matter of common knowledge that there is a spurt in crimes. This may not be accepted by Government, who may come forward with all kinds of statistics. That apart, the fact remains that law and order is deteriorating.

With respect to this particular bank, we have this very routine reply that is being given by Government. It just narrates the incident, and says that action is being taken. This shows the indifferent attitude the Government has taken, at which I must express my serious disappointment.

I have been very keenly listening to the reply given by the hon. Minister. That reply is also most disappointing. We have been told that police is asking the banks to make security arrangements. There are financial constraints; and, therefore, there is helplessness. Banks will require so many thousands of armed guards involving an expenditure of so many crores. So, there is helplessness.

Another point made is that it concerns the State Governments. So, let the State Governments look after this thing. It is a very disappointing way of tackling the whole situation.

This particular instance deserves serious consideration. There are three important aspects which I would like to place before the Government and the House. In the first place, this instance of bank dacoity is a glaring instance of the lapse of all security arrangements by the Police. When I say so, and make this specific charge against the Government—to be rebutted if they can do so—I must draw your attention to certain important points with respect to the background to this charge. It has been already

pointed out that this particular bank dacoity is not the first of its kind. In the recent past, we have had two more. We found two more day-light robberies.

The Canara Bank Branch in South Extension was looted of Rs. 6.35 lakhs. The second instance in the recent past was of the Greater Kailash Branch of the Bank of India where Rs. 1.75 lakhs were looted. Now, this is the third major bank dacoity in South Delhi. There is also the similarity of *modus operandi*. As has been pointed out by one hon. member, the dacoity is taking place at banks which conduct business when other establishments in the area are closed. Then another similarity in the *modus operandi* in all the three cases was that the dacoits entered the banks a little later after the banks had closed their money transactions for the day. Here we have two particular points. This is not the first instance of the bank dacoity in the recent past; and secondly, there is the similarity of *modus operandi*.

We have a tall claim made by this Government with respect to the security arrangements that have been made. We had been told and are being told many times repeatedly that there is round-the-clock patrolling. This particular assurance has been given to us many times. We had been told of this so-called round-the-clock patrolling many times. I do not know whether that patrolling was in snoring slumber when this dacoity was being committed? When the second major bank dacoity took place, we were assured that there would be police pickets especially near the banks operated during holidays or after office hours. Was there or was there not an implementation of this assurance that had been given to the people of Delhi? After the second bank dacoity, was there police picket here? Yes, perhaps, there was a lone constable standing somewhere in the corner; and that constable also perhaps moved away from the scene immediately before the money transaction had

come to a close, that is, immediately before the time for the *modus operandi* had come about.

We have been told that police patrolling has been intensified; we were also told that there are 12 motor-cycles fitted with wireless sets which have been mobilised to patrol different areas. Where are those motor-cycles? What has happened to them? We were also told that four vans are ever ready to follow robbers. These are all assurances given only some time past. If you so wish, I will give the dates also when these assurances had been given to the people of Delhi. But I do not know what happened to this patrolling, the police pickets, these vans and so on?

Therefore, from this it is clear that there had been a serious lapse on the part of the police with regard to security. The whole operation took place in the bank within 10 minutes. Then the dacoits drove away on the wrong side of the Ring Road. There was no patrolling, no check, nothing. Then they had time and leisure enough to set one of their cars ablaze. All this had happened. Where was the so-called patrolling? The car of the dacoits sped away on the wrong side of the Ring Road. But there was nobody to challenge especially in the background of the increasing number of crimes and this being not the first incident of major bank dacoity. Therefore, in order to help the Government to maintain law and order I would like to know whether any serious inquiry has been made into the lapses by the Police themselves if not whether such an inquiry would be made and the police officials responsible for lapses of security arrangements would be taken to task?

The second aspect of the whole thing is the lapses and laxity in the detection of crimes, which has been clearly borne out by some other hon. Members also. Even in the case of the first two dacoities which took place some time ago, though vigorous investigations are being made, those

vigorous investigations are not leading to any results.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): He is using physical force to ask the question.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: The so called vigorous investigation has produced no effect.

The same day when this Bank was looted i.e. on 21st February another petrol pump was looted by robbers. And that looting of the petrol pump was also not the first incident. But just four or five days prior to that, three petrol pumps had been looted. And what did the Government do? The Government just told the petrol pump owners to keep their own security arrangements. This is the indifferent attitude that has been taken. Therefore, the second aspect is: what is being done to see that the so called vigorous investigation does not merely remain vigorous but also becomes effective? With all the vehemence at my command.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Every word that is used by you is vehement.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: I would like to say that the present tendency is to hide facts with respect to crimes. Here I may say that false statistics about crimes starting from the police station and ultimately ending up with this Government are being given in Parliament and outside. Here you will agree with me when I say that if we try to hide the extent of the disease, no doctor on earth will be able to prescribe any remedy, not to talk about cure of the same. Therefore, I want to ask: what attempt is being made in order to see that the statistics with respect to crime are being made to reflect the actual position? For example, I referred to the petrol pump dacoity on the same day, i.e. 21st February. You will be surprised and angry also Mr. Deputy-Speaker, to

[Shri G. M. Banatwalla]

know that on the same day, the crime bulletin that was issued by the Delhi Police referred to no such incident having taken place. This is an attempt to hide the extent of the crime. And it is when we try to hide the disease that no remedy can be prescribed for that particular purpose. What attempt is being made in order to see that this particular tendency is curbed and our statistics reveal the actual health of the nation? I hope that due attention and serious attention will be paid to all these three aspects, namely, the lapses in security arrangements on the part of the Police, lapses and laxity as far as the investigation is concerned and removal of the tendency to hide statistics with respect to crimes. It is only then that we will be able to make any progress with respect to improving the law and order situation.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I will confine myself to the subject matter under discussion, because he has very vociferously, very effectively and very vigorously referred to the various omissions and commissions on the part of the Government. There will be a proper time for me to deal with those things more forcefully than he has done today and the Government is prepared to come out with all the replies that he requires.

He referred to complacency or indifference on the part of the police. So far as this incident is concerned, I want to make it very clear that there was neither complacency, nor negligence, nor connivance. I can just narrate the events so that the hon. Member may know what actually happened.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: May I point out...

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: He is an hon. and respected Member. Do you think that I will not reply to the points raised by him?

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: But that respected Member is not allowed to go to Sholapur and Pune.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: Respectable Members must stay in their own respective places.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why should he go to Pune?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please do not bring in extraneous matters.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I will again reiterate that the police were alert and took immediate action. This Bank is located in the ground floor of the double storey residential house in Maharani Bagh. The owner lives in the first floor. The building is in a lower level than the road. There are two telephones in the bank. One telephone was put out of order by the dacoits. The other was working. There is a telephone in the owner's house, but it was not in order. The landlord's son had to go all the way to telephone to the Control Room. The incident is reported to have taken place between 12.30 and 12.38 hrs. So, the whole thing took place in 8 minutes.

AN HON. MEMBER: They are competent people.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: The intimation was received by the Control Room at 12.44 p.m. The police arrived at the scene at 12.49 p.m., within 5 minutes. (Interruptions)

The first duty of the police is to see that the premises is cordoned off so that the evidence that is available is not tampered with. They have also to give protection to the Bank and its employees. Then they have to make enquiries. They were told after some time, after 10-15 minutes, that they have gone out in a car bearing a particular number. Immediately, the news was flashed to all the places to spot out this particular car. One Control Room gave the information—that that the particular car is found one km away from the Bank.

found one km away from the Bank, but it is burning. So, the police went there and again made enquiries. If a car is burning, they have to find out what has happened to the occupants of the car. After some investigation, one gentleman came forward and said "there was another car waiting on the spot, when this car was burning, they got into the other car and sped away". By the time the police received this information, that car would have gone beyond their reach, because they were travelling in a car and not in a bullock cart or on foot. So, by the time the police came to know that they have abandoned the car and sped away in another car there was a gap of one hour. Still, within the time available the police did their best. I may tell you that I have mentioned last year's case also. The investigation is on, the investigation is in progress. So, it is not in public interest or in the interest of apprehending the culprits that the details are placed before the House. It is for a thorough, efficient investigation so that the culprits may not take any clue and go beyond the arms of law or justice. So, for that purpose we said that no efforts are spared in getting the matter completely investigated.

(Interruptions)

So far as the investigation goes, there does not seem to be any lag. I am speaking about police. About the other part of the investigation it is yet to be worked out and investigations have to be made, then only we can say whether there is collusion, connivance or complacency, indifference or whatever it is. It is not proper at this stage to reveal all those things. Investigation is proceeding on. I may assure hon. Mr. Banatwalla about this. He has taken exception to "vigorous" steps. If I say "strong" steps, then? I have to find an appropriate word to say about the intensity and sincerity of the Government. If I used only the word "step", he would have asked "Why not vigorous? Why not strong?"

So, in order to guard myself from Mr. Banatwalla, I said that vigorous steps are being taken, investigation is on and we will spare no efforts to see that the culprits are booked.

SHRI A. NEELALOHITHADASAN NADAR (Trivandrum): What about banning his visit to Pune?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please don't disturb. He is not yielding.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I said, he has been placed in his respective place. I have already told this in the House.

13.27 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH): Sir, I beg to move.

"That this House do agree with the Twenty-fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 23rd February, 1982."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Twenty-fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 23rd February, 1982."

The motion was adopted.

13.28 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till thirty minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.