

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

TWENTY-SECOND REPORT

Shri V. B. Gandhi (Bombay City—North): I beg to present the Twenty-second Report of the Public Accounts Committee on Appropriation Accounts (Posts and Telegraphs), 1953-54 and Audit Reports, 1955, Parts I and II and Audit Report (P&T), 1956, Part I.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

FORTY-EIGHTH AND FIFTY-EIGHTH
REPORTS

Shri B. G. Mehta (Gohilwad): I beg to present the following Reports of the Estimates Committee:—

- (1) Forty-eighth Report on the Ministry of Transport (Major Ports).
- (2) Fifty-eighth Report on the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report of the Committee.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCEACCIDENT NEAR VINAY NAGAR LEVEL
CROSSING

Shri Radha Raman (Delhi City): Under Rule 216, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Railways to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

“Railway Accident at Vinay Nagar level crossing on the 23rd March, 1957.”

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Jagjivan Ram): At about 4-55 hours on 23rd March, 1957, while UP Ghaziabad-Delhi Safdarganj Goods Train with a load of 22-23 four-wheelers hauled by Steam Engine No. 1329 was passing the level crossing No. 5 between Nizamuddin and Delhi Safdarjang, it collided against motor truck DLC-9130 approaching from Maharauli side and proceeding towards Delhi. The collision occurred at right-angles. The Truck was completely

smashed and pushed to a distance of 240 feet. This resulted in the death of four occupants of the truck and serious injuries to the driver of the truck who got entangled in the debris. One remaining occupant of the truck who was thrown off escaped with minor injuries. None of the railway employees was injured.

Between Nizamuddin and Delhi Safdarjang, there are 4 halt stations, namely, Lajpat Nagar, Seva Nagar, Lodi Colony and Vinay Nagar. There are also 5 level-crossings on this block-section. Level-crossing Gate No. 5 at which the accident occurred is between Lodi Colony and Vinay Nagar. It is a 'B' Class level crossing manned by two Gatemen working 12 hours shifts, the duty hours being 8 hours to 20 hours and 20 hours to 8 hours. The road leading through this gate connects Maharauli with New Delhi. While approaching the gate by train from Nizamuddin towards Safdarjang the view of the road on Maharauli side is obstructed on account of gate-lodge, trees and gang huts. Signals are provided on either side of the gates to regulate movements of trains and are located at distance of 1080 feet and 614 feet from the gate on the Nizamuddin and Safdarjang sides respectively. The gate is interlocked and interlocking arrangements are such that after the gates have been closed, the gate lock-keys are extracted from the gate-locks and inserted in the locks provided on the gate signal lever, before the signal can be lowered. While the gates are open, it is not possible to lower signals. The track at the site of the accident is on the straight and with a gradient of 1 in 460 rising towards Safdarjang. The road at the level crossing is also on the straight. It is level between the gates but has a slope of 1 in 77 on Maharauli side and 1 in 60 on the airport side.

On this section, four passengers and two goods trains are running daily each way.

As the Goods Train did not reach Delhi-Safdarjang within the schedule time, enquiries were made by the

Train Controller on duty Delhi Division about the whereabouts of the goods train and at 5-45 hours the Safdarjang Air Port advised that an accident between the goods train and a road truck at the level crossing gate had taken place. Immediately the Safdarjang Hospital was contacted to send their ambulance van to the level crossing. Simultaneously, the Railway ambulance and doctor were also called out at 5-47 hours. The "Flying Squad" of the Police also arrived at about the same time. Efforts were made by them to take out the driver of the truck who was found entangled between the wreckage of the truck and Cow catcher of the train engine, but when it was found that this could not be done, the fire officer sent for the cutting plant from the Air Port Electric Shop and succeeded in extricating the driver of the road truck at about 7-00 hours. He was immediately rushed to the Safdarjang Hospital where he is reported to be making satisfactory progress.

The debris of the truck, after preliminary police enquiries was cleared from the track at about 8-55 hours and block section was cleared at 9-33 hours.

A District Officers' Committee consisting of Divisional Operating Superintendent, Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Divisional Engineer, Divisional Signal & Tele-Communication Engineer, Delhi is holding an enquiry and is expected to submit its report in a day or two. Preliminary enquiry seems to indicate that the head light of the engine was not burning at the time of the accident, and that the Driver is reported to have passed the signal in the danger position. The findings of the District Officers' Enquiry regarding the cause of the accident is awaited.

The damage to Railway property is estimated to be Rs. 200.

Shri C. K. Nair (Outer Delhi) rose—

Mr. Speaker: No question. Hon. Members may study the statement at leisure and put questions tomorrow or some other day.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: The Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House in its Twentieth Report has recommended that leave of absence may be granted to the following members for the periods indicated in the Report:—

- (1) Shri Digvijaya Narain Singh
- (2) Dr. Shaukatullah Shah Ansari
- (3) Shri Muhammad Islamuddin

The Committee has further recommended that the period of absence of Dr. Satyaban Roy during the Thirtieth and Fourteenth Sessions may be condoned and that he may be granted leave of absence for the entire period of the current Session.

I take it that the House agrees with the recommendations of the Committee.

Shri Kamath (Hoshangabad): With regard to this paragraph No. 5 relating to Dr. Satyaban Roy I have to point out one thing. I do not wish to be unhelpful, but whenever a Member has applied for leave of absence in all cases always the reasons for the absence have been given. Here, if you look at this paragraph 5 carefully, you will see that the total period of absence of the Member during this Session amounted to 60 days and the Committee recommends that the absence of the Member for this period is condoned. It has not recommended that the leave be granted, but that the absence may be condoned altogether. I can understand leave of absence being granted to a Member. I think, in view of the healthy traditions in this House, Sir, it is necessary that whenever leave is granted, reasons should be stated to the House. Here it merely says that the absence may be condoned. No reasons have been assigned for the condonation recommended by the Committee. I would, therefore, request you, Sir, to elicit from the Chairman of this Committee, Shri Altekar, as to whether any communication has been received from this Member or, whether the Committee tried to enquire from him why he was absent, and what reasons he gave