

[Secretary.]

August, 1958, and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill".

- (ii) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 125 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on the 8th September, 1958, agreed without any amendment to the Sugar Export Promotion Bill, 1958, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 26th August, 1958."

12-05 hrs.

PETITION RE: LIABILITY OF STATE IN TORT

श्री अर्जुन सिंह भवारिया । श्रीमन्, मैं टार्ट में राज्य के दायित्व के बारे में एक याचिकाकार द्वारा हस्ताक्षर की हुई एक याचिका पेश करता हूँ ।

12-05½ hrs.

STATEMENT RE: EXPLOSION OF AMMUNITION PACKAGES IN PATHANKOT

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence (Shri Fatehsingh-  
rao Gaekwad): With your permission, Sir, I would like to make a statement on behalf of Shri V. K. Krishna Menon.

Further to the statements that the Minister of Defence made in this House on the 25th and 27th February, 1958, regarding the explosion at Pathankot, which took place on the 24th February, 1958, I beg to submit that the Court of Inquiry which was instituted to inquire into the explosion has completed its work.....

Mr. Speaker: How long is it?

Shri Fatehsingh-  
rao Gaekwad: About two pages.

Mr. Speaker: This is a statement relating to the explosion in Pathankot in February last. It may be laid on the Table. Hon. Members can read it themselves.

(Remainder of the statement laid on the Table)

In accordance with the report submitted by the Court, the number of casualties of Civilians involved in the explosion was 37, of whom 34 died; eleven bodies were recovered and identified and the remaining 23 are missing, presumed to be killed. The number of casualties of Army personnel was 16 of whom 8 died, five bodies were recovered and identified and 2 are missing, believed killed. The damage to the Railway property has been assessed by the Court of Inquiry as Rs. 1,25,300. The loss to the Defence property and stores has not yet been finally assessed, but it is feared that this will be of the order of Rs. 11 lakhs.

The unloading of explosives was being done with due care under the supervision of trained and experienced personnel and there was no evidence of negligence or carelessness on their part. The wagons were received at Pathankot intact and there is no evidence to prove that the explosion was due to any act of sabotage. The civilians who were employed on the unloading work were regular employees of the Ordnance Rail Head group at Pathankot. The explosives in the wagons were inspected prior to their despatch in accordance with the regulations. In view of the fact that most of the essential witnesses died instantly, it was not really possible to say conclusively what was the actual cause of the accident. As all safety