

that we may stop all imports at some stage. Last year, we had to import some sugar, and this year also we have to import some sugar. We would like to stop these imports. So, we want to increase the sugarcane production in the country. With this end in view, we are giving manure loans to the cultivators, and also providing more irrigation facilities to the cane growers, by constructing more tubewells, as has been done in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. We are giving these facilities, with a view to increasing the yield.

Dr. Rama Rao: How far is this reduction due to the lower price of cane?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: That I cannot say.

Shri Kelappan: What proportion of this production goes to the sugar mills?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: We are supposed to produce about fifty-two lakhs of tons, speaking in terms of jaggery, in this country; out of this, ten and a quarter lakhs of tons is sugar.

WORKERS IN SALT INDUSTRY

*1580. **Shri Keshavaiengar:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the condition of the workers in the salt industry;

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to ameliorate their condition;

(c) what is the total number of salt workers in India; and

(d) what is the amount of foreign exchange earned by exporting salt in 1952 and 1953?

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): (a) and (b). Information from the State Governments concerned is being collected.

(c) the average number of daily labour engaged in the Salt industry is about 32,000.

(d) The foreign exchange earned by the export of salt in 1952 and 1953 is

about Rs. 57 lakhs and Rs. 45 lakhs respectively.

Shri Keshavaiengar: May I know whether this figure of 32,000 includes seasonal workers, and if not, the figure including seasonal workers?

Shri Abid Ali: It includes seasonal workers, but during the season, the number increases to about 56,000.

Shri Nanadas: May I know the reason for not applying the Factories Act to these salt factories, even though these salt factories are for all practical purposes, factories?

Shri Abid Ali: Wherever it can be made applicable, the Factories Act is applied.

Shri Keshavaiengar: May I know whether the Minimum Wages Act is applicable to these workers, whether any minimum wage has been fixed for them, and if so, what that minimum wage is?

Shri Abid Ali: The Government of Bombay have already included employment in the salt industry in the Schedule to the Minimum Wages Act. The Governments of Travancore-Cochin and Saurashtra are considering the question of including the employment in this industry in the Schedule to the Act.

Shri Raghuramaiah: May I know the countries to which salt is being exported?

Shri Abid Ali: Mostly to Japan.

IMPORT OF RAW SUGAR

*1582. **Shri Kasliwal:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether any applications from some sugar merchants have been received for the import of raw sugar;

(b) whether Government propose to issue or have issued the necessary permits for the import of raw sugar; and

(c) if so, how much raw sugar will be imported?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri M. V. Krishnappa):

(a) Yes, but most applications are from sugar mills.

(b) Government propose to issue permits for import of raw sugar for refining purposes only.

(c) It is difficult to say at this stage how much will be actually imported.

Shri Kasliwal: Is this sugar imported as anticipatory to short production due to a further fall in sugarcane acreage?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Not at all. We want to employ the idle capacity of the sugar mills. Some of them work for only two or three months, and during the rest of the period they lie idle. We want to import some sugar and give it to them for refining purposes, so that they may have work during the other times also. But in the present context, it may be said that because of sugar shortage also we are thinking of all these things.

Shri Kasliwal: Have Government fixed any quota or target for import of sugar during 1954, and if so, whether the import of this sugar is included in that quota or is over and above that quota?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: The target for sugar has been announced on the floor of this House. We fell short of our sugar requirements last year and had to import sugar. This year also we will have to import sugar. We expect the consumption to be about 17 lakh tons whereas the production this year may be 10½ lakh tons. If required, the rest of the sugar will have to be imported.

Shri Bogawat: May I know the rates allowed for refining this raw sugar?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It depends upon the price of raw sugar outside.

Shri Bogawat: Is there no fixed rate?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: No.

TELEPHONE MESSAGE RATE SYSTEM

***1583. Sardar Hukam Singh:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the message rate system has been extended to any other stations during 1953-54; and

(b) what has been the income of Delhi Telephones from Telephone Number '94' since it was metered?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes; it was extended to three exchanges:

- (i) Allepey
- (ii) Kottayam
- (iii) Quilon in 1953.

(b) The estimated revenue is about Rs. 4,20,000 upto 15th March, 1954 from the date of metering which is 1st September, 1952.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Has the introduction of the message rate system affected the income on account of telephones from the stations that have been brought within its operation?

Shri Raj Bahadur: There is not any significant change. If anything, it has shown an upward trend.

Sardar Hukam Singh: May I know whether the decision to meter Telephone Number '94' was taken purely on account of financial considerations or on any other grounds as well?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It was taken in the interests of efficiency of service also. We were getting during the busy hours as many as 4,000 to 5,000 calls per hour.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Have Government ever considered the advisability of cutting off this meter for at least one hour in the morning to help the subscribers to adjust their watches in the morning?

Shri Raj Bahadur: That is a suggestion we shall bear in mind.