

**The Deputy Minister of Defence (Sardar Majithia):** (a) Since 1946.

(b) For the purpose of introduction of adult franchise and the reservation of seat(s) for Scheduled Castes/Tribes, as also for the revival of the Ward System.

(c) Yes. By the end of 1954.

**Shri N. L. Joshi:** May I know how many times elections were proposed to be held and then postponed during this period?

**Sardar Majithia:** So far as I remember, once.

**Shri N. L. Joshi:** May I know whether any representations were received by the Government for holding the elections during this period?

**Sardar Majithia:** The question was mentioned so many times, and it was due to various difficulties—firstly, introduction of the adult franchise. Then we had a single unit of the whole Cantonment. Representations were received against that and we had to introduce the ward system, and the wards had to be delimited, notified and gazetted. All this took time. Now that everything has been completed, we intend to hold the elections by the end of this year.

**Shri N. L. Joshi:** May I know whether there has been growing dissatisfaction with the working of the present Board?

**Sardar Majithia:** To begin with, it is a matter of opinion. Secondly, the Government has had no indication so far. In any case, as I have said, the elections are going to be held by the end of this year. So there is no point in pursuing that further.

सरदार ए० एस० सहगल : कॅंटनमेंट के पास होने के उपरान्त कितने कॅंटनमेंट बोर्ड में जनता को अपने प्रतिनिधि चुनने का अवसर मिला है ?

**Sardar Majithia:** I am afraid I will have to collect the information about that because it is a long time ago that the Cantonment Act was passed.

#### IMPORT DUTY ON PEARLS

\*732. **Shrimati Jayashri:** (a) Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state the amount that has so far been realised from the 20 per cent import duty levied on "real pearls unset"?

(b) What is the effect of this duty on this industry?

**The Deputy Minister of Finance (Shri A. C. Guha):** (a) Separate figures for the import duty collected on raw pearls are not readily available because there is no separate head for them in the trade and revenue statistics.

(b) Artisans, skilled in the special processes of drilling, bleaching, and polishing real pearls, were reported to be suffering for lack of adequate raw material and the industry was understood to be also facing difficulties in the export markets. Being in the nature of a cottage industry, processing in bond or export under claim for drawback was not easy. Taking all the factors into consideration, Government decided to abolish the duty by notification with effect from the 23rd February, 1954.

**Shrimati Jayashri:** May I know whether the processing of real pearls is a cottage industry?

**Shri A. C. Guha:** That I have already said. That is why Government have abolished the duty from 23rd February.

**Shrimati A. Kale:** May I know from where they are imported and what is the quantity?

**Shri A. C. Guha:** Generally they are imported from the Persian Gulf side. The quantity varies according to the consumption demand in the country from year to year. Presently it is not very much. The quantity has gone down.

**Shri Bhandari:** Is the Minister aware that the precious stone cutting industry is also suffering on account of this duty?

**Shri A. C. Guha:** May be. The hon. Member may have got some information.

#### LOSS OF BALLOT BOXES

\*733. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Will the Minister of Law be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that of the 20 cases of ballot papers sent recently by the Election Commission to Travancore-Cochin for use in the present election in that State, only 17 were received there:

(b) if so, where and how the remaining three cases disappeared; and

(c) whether the lost cases have been traced?

**The Minister of Law and Minority Affairs (Shri Biswas):** (a) Yes.

(b) It has been reported that the three cases containing 6 lakhs ballot papers were stolen at Vanganoor Railway Station, in the Andhra State, under the mistaken belief that they contained valuable articles which could be profitably disposed of.

(c) Nearly 1.5 lakhs ballot papers, out of the lost 6 lakhs ballot papers, have so far been recovered by the Andhra police. One person has been arrested—since then I have received information that two persons were arrested—and further investigation is proceeding. The Election Commission has taken necessary action to ensure that none of the lost ballot papers could be misused in any way at the General Election and has issued detailed instructions to all concerned accordingly.

I have just now received a report that the two persons have been convicted.

**Some Hon. Members:** Are they connected with politics?

**Shri Biswas:** They belong to a gang of miscreants who were responsible for similar offences—not in respect of ballot boxes but of other things.

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** May I know whether the persons arrested and convicted include the person or persons who were carrying those ballot boxes from here to Travancore?

**Shri Biswas:** No. They were local offenders, not persons who followed these ballot boxes from the Nasik Printing Office to Travancore-Cochin, the destination of the ballot boxes. On the way, the train stopped at Vanganoor Station for about a couple of minutes, and within those two minutes these boxes were removed.

**Some Hon. Members rose—**

**Mr. Speaker:** Let us now go to the next question.

#### INDIAN CUSTODIAN FORCE

\*734. **Shri K. C. Sodhia:** Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount paid to shipping companies for the transportation of the custodian force to Korea; and

(b) whether these companies are Indian?

**The Minister of Defence Organisation (Shri Tyagi):** (a) and (b). Four ships were used to carry personnel of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission and the Custodian Force to Korea. Of these, two ships were British, namely, the *EMPIRE PRIDE* and the *DILWARA*. They were arranged by the UK Government and no payment on their account has been made to their owners. The remaining two ships, namely, the *JALADURGA* and the *JALAGOPAL*, belong to the Scindia Steam Navigation Company Limited. An advance of Rs. 5 lakhs was paid in respect of these two ships. This will be adjusted against the final payment when the account is finally settled.

**Shri K. C. Sodhia:** What about the return journey?

**Shri Tyagi:** On the return journey, the *Astrias* is bringing in about 1535 personnel, the *Musafiri* about 1450, the *Captain Hobson* 582, the *Jalagopal* 1298, and the *Jaladurga* 1270.