

Shri Hathi: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Next question.

PEARL PROCESSING

*2146. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state the efforts that are being made to revive the industry of pearl processing in India?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Karmarkar): The following steps have been taken to encourage the processing of pearls in the country:

(1) The import quota for raw pearls has been increased from 10 per cent. which was the quota during July-December, 1953, to 50 per cent. during January-June, 1954.

(2) The import duty on raw pearls other than cultured pearls has been abolished.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know if any representations were received from persons engaged in this industry and whether they were considered by the Government?

Shri Karmarkar: Yes, Sir. Some representations were received and the results are given in the answer.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: What is the extent of the total market for processed pearls in this country?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to have notice about it.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know how much loss the industry has suffered on account of this decline during the last one year?

Shri Karmarkar: It is very difficult to assess any loss or gain in this.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know how many workers are affected on account of the decline in this industry?

Shri Karmarkar: I understand that the number of processors round about Bombay, subject to correction, is about 1,000. Dealers who are doing this work on a piece basis and about 150 firms have formed themselves into an association in Bombay called the Bombay Zaria Mahasabha.

Mr. Speaker: The Question List is over.

Shri M. D. Ramasami: Question No. 2137 may be taken up, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: On behalf of Mr. Muniswamy? The hon. Minister of Information and Broadcasting. The hon. Minister has left under the impression that the Member was absent.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Can the hon. Ministers leave before Question Hour is over.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. When the particular questions were passed over, he left under the *bona fide* impression that he need not wait here just anticipating that the Member who comes late or the Member who is given an authority is going to ask that question. I do not think he should do so, but it would have been better if he had been present in the House.

Shri Raghavaiah rose—

(At this stage, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting entered the House.)

Some Hon. Members: He has come.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I am going to the next business.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

EXPORT OF MERCURIC COMPOUNDS

*2129. **Shri H. G. Vaishnav:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state the reasons for banning the export of the compounds of Mercury?

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): Export of mercury has been banned since August, 1953, but export of mercury salts and its compounds were allowed. Government, however, found that stocks of mercury in the country were rapidly being converted into Mercury Sulphides and Oxides from which mercury could be recovered and exported, and the ban on the export of mercury which was imposed to conserve adequate stocks for the country was being circumvented. The export of mercury oxide and sulphide was