

(b) It is not possible to make an estimate at this stage.

Shri D. C. Sharma : May I know how many persons are staying in this transit camp at Lahore waiting for evacuation to India ?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna : I do not know the number of persons staying in the camp at the present moment, but I have a break-up which indicates that during the last five or six years, as many as 16,844 persons have used this transit camp.

Shri D. C. Sharma : May I know on what items the expenditure referred to by the hon. Minister has been incurred ?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna : There are only two main items ; one is the establishment, and the other is the contingencies.

Shri Kamath : Is there active co-ordination fund collaboration between the Ministry of Rehabilitation and the Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply, so far as the work of the recovery of abducted persons is concerned ?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna : How does it arise out of this question ? Here, we are referring to a camp that is in Lahore, which receives non- evacuees who want to come to India, persons who may have been forcibly converted to Islam during the time of Partition, and Indians going to Pakistan for business and other matters. This camp is simply used for accommodating those persons during their transit either from Pakistan to India or from India to Pakistan, for a temporary period.

Shri D. C. Sharma : May I know whether there are any applications pending with the Ministry of Rehabilitation from those persons who are waiting for crossing over to India, and whether the question of Harijans who are asking to be sent across to India has been solved ?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna : This camp is being administered by our Deputy High Commissioner in Lahore. Applications are received from time to time, people are placed in the camp, and after the normal formalities have been gone into, they are sent across.

Shri Gidwani : May I know whether the Pakistan authorities are putting any impediments in the way of their removal to India ?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna : In their removal to India, I would require notice. But as far as my information goes, all these cases are duly examined. There may be a difficulty arising here and there, but I have no personal knowledge at the moment.

Salt

*1164. **Shri Ibrahim :** Will the Minister of Production be pleased to state whether any kind of control is being exercised at present by Government on the production and distribution of salt ?

The Deputy Minister of Production (Shri Satish Chandra) : The manufacture of salt is subject to the terms and conditions of a licence granted by the Salt Commissioner. The persons whose individual holdings do not exceed 10 acres are exempt from this licence. Quality control is enforced on salt produced by the licencees and sub-standard salt containing less than 94% Sodium Chloride is not normally released for human consumption.

Large dealers in Calcutta with stocks exceeding 1,000 tons are required to maintain a certain percentage as reserve which cannot be disposed of without the permission of the Salt Commissioner.

In order to ensure movement under the Zonal Scheme drawn up under Section 27(A) of the Indian Railways Act, 1890, a limited control is exercised on movement of salt from Production Centres to Consuming Areas. There is otherwise no restriction on the movement by road, river, rail, or any other mode of transport.

Some State Governments also exercise control over the sale, distribution and price of salt in their respective territories.

Shri Ibrahim : May I know the annual consumption of rock-salt in India ?

Shri Satish Chandra : At present, rock salt is not being imported.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi : What sort of control is maintained over the unlicensed salt manufacturers who are not able to keep up the standards of consumable salt ?

Shri Satish Chandra : There is already a clause in the licence, according to which the quality of salt can be controlled. *Government are considering the proposal now to enforce it for all small holdings in other States also.

*This was later corrected by the Deputy Minister of Production *vide* Column No. 4164.

Shri Kasliwal : May I know whether Government propose further to relax controls on the production and distribution of salt in addition to what has been stated by the hon. Minister ?

Shri Satish Chandra : As I said, there is not much of statutory control. If the hon. Member has heard my answer, he will find that the only control exercised at present is on the zonal movement. That in fact assists the movement of salt from the producing centres to the consuming areas. The quality control is of course exercised on the production of salt.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi : I wanted to know about the manufacture of salt by unlicensed manufacturers. Is any sort of control maintained over those people with regard to the manufacture of standard salt ?

Shri Satish Chandra : The answer that I gave was in regard to unlicensed manufacturers. The salt manufactured by licensed manufacturers is subject to quality control. *But as far as unlicensed manufacturers are concerned, whose holdings are less than 10 acres, it is now being subjected to quality control in Madras, and the idea is to extend it to other States.

Shri V. P. Nayar : In answer to a supplementary, the hon. Minister stated that there is no rock-salt manufactured in India at present. May I know whether Government are aware that for purposes for which rock-salt has to be used, especially medicinal preparations, the rock-salt has to be purchased at prices varying from about 25 times the normal price of rock-salt, because it is in terrible short supply here ?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker : That is a suggestion for the production of rock-salt.

Shri V. P. Nayar : We are importing rock-salt from Pakistan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker : That is only a suggestion for action. If the hon. Member wants to explain, I have no objection.

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy) : A small quantity of rock-salt is being produced at Mandi. Apart from that, I may tell the hon. Member that according to the recent trade agreement between India and Pakistan, a certain quantity of rock-salt has been agreed to be imported.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy : May I know what technical advice Government provide to the small manufacturers to manufacture salt to standard specifications ?

Shri K. C. Reddy : The Salt Department has a scheme by means of which the quality of salt etc., that is produced may be improved. They have drawn up a five year scheme, and it is being implemented gradually, and under this scheme, the small manufacturers also will be benefited.

Steel Fabricating Units

*1167. **Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad :** Will the Minister of Iron and Steel be pleased to refer to the statement made by him in the House on the 15th April, 1955 and state :

(a) whether any final decision has since been taken for the setting up of three steel fabricating units with foundry and forging capacity in the country ; and

(b) if so, whether they will be established by public sector or private sector ?

The Minister of Industries (Shri Kanungo) : (a) No, Sir. But the matter is under consideration.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad : By what time can we expect Government to come to a final decision on this matter ?

Shri Kanungo : Shortly.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad : What is the meaning of 'shortly' ?

Shri Kanungo : I cannot give a date, but I believe it will be within this year.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad : May I know whether any decision has been taken about the location of the fabricating units ?

The Minister of Commerce and Industry and Iron and Steel (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari) : I would like to explain further what my colleague has said. The problem of setting up forging plants and foundries on a big scale is not an easy thing. The technical problems involved therein are rather difficult. We are investigating into the possibility of getting the type of machinery that is required, the type of plants that we require etc., and I am afraid a technical evaluation of our needs will certainly take time. It is really not a matter of my going and purchasing something in the bazar tomorrow and setting it up.

*This was later corrected by the Deputy Minister of Production vide Column No. 4164