

salt production centres in the State of Bombay is 20.

(b) A statement is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 36.]

(c) and (d). Certain small pan owners have failed to keep the embankments in proper repairs, but this has not resulted in any substantial loss of production.

(e) Commencement of salt manufacture depends entirely on the individual manufacturer, who is guided by the local market position.

(f) Under the terms of the licenses issued to them the owners are bound to carry out proper repairs to the salt works. If they fail to do so, the work can be carried out by the Salt Department at the cost of the licensees concerned, and the expenditure recovered from them. The powers have however not been utilised as private production is generally on the increase and the supply exceeds the demand. Government have no authority to force the manufacturer to commence production in a particular month.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FOR IMPORT, EXPORT AND RAILWAY CLEARANCE

28. **Shri Raghavaiah:** Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any Government organised Agency for import, export (by sea and air), railway clearance and forwarding under his Ministry;

(b) whether there were separate Government Agents under the same Ministry;

(c) if so, whether the rates of Agency charges were different;

(d) the overall Government Agency charges, year by year, between 1947 to 1952; and

(e) whether the cheapest rate of Government Agency charge is availed of in clearing Government consignments under this Ministry?

The Deputy Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri Buragohain): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are different clearing agents at different ports but there is only one agent functioning at each port.

(c) The rates of agency charges vary from port to port.

(d) A statement is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 37.]

(e) The clearing agents at the ports are appointed on the basis of advertised tenders after every three years. The contracts are awarded to well established clearing houses whose rates are the lowest, provided they are recommended by the Customs and Port Trust Authorities as fit for handling all types of cargoes and are also reported as financially sound.

CLEARING AGENCY

29. **Shri Raghavaiah:** Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state:

(a) whether "Profit" was derived from year to year out of the cheapest Organisation for clearing Government Consignments under the Printing and Stationery Organisation;

(b) if so, the amount of profit year by year; and

(c) the reasons that led to the abolition and transfer of the import and export work so long carried out efficiently at a low cost by Government Agency under the Deputy Controller of Stationery at Calcutta?

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Sardar Swaran Singh): (a) The clearing and Shipping Section of Central Stationery Office was not run on a commercial basis but "proforma" accounts reveal that there were both profits and losses in running it.