

Discovery of Rock Salt in Indian Thar Desert

5390. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Geologists have discovered a massive bed containing several millions tons of rock-salt one hundred metres below the Indian Thar desert; and

(b) if so, the scheme of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a). The Geological Survey of India, in the course of their investigation, have recently discovered large deposits of rock-salt (Sodium Chloride) in Churu and Bikaner Districts of Rajasthan. In different bore holes the top surface of the rock salt layers occurs at depths varying from 324 metres to 664 metres. The cumulative thickness of rock salt varies from 104 metres to 432 metres. The total resource of rock salt in the area explored so far has been estimated at around 8 billion tonnes. The potential area extends over 50,000 sq. kms. out of which 5,000 sq. kms. have so far been explored by scout drilling.

(b). The Department of Industrial Development has been requested to consider preparation of a feasibility report to see whether these vast deposits could be commercially mined.

Strike by Officers of Vijaya Bank

5391. SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that officers of the Vijaya Bank went on a strike on 26th December, 1980 and 540 out of 578 branches were closed as 1800 officers participated in the strike;

(b) whether it is a fact that even after 34 days of the strike notice, no

attempt was made to settle the dispute; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA): (a). Yes, Sir. According to the Bank as a result of this strike, about 500 of their branches remained closed.

(b) and (c). The strike notice issued by Officers' Association was to press their demands in regard to removal of D.A. ceiling, parity of salary and allowances with other nationalised banks, etc. The question of the revision of pay scales, allowances and perquisites of the officers of the newly nationalised banks, including Vijaya Bank, is under active consideration of the Government.

Closure of Showrooms of NTC, Coimbatore Division

5392. PROF. P. J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a few showrooms of NTC Coimbatore Division closed down;

(d) if so, the details thereof?

(c) whether the accounts and stock of these showrooms are verified; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN): (a) and (b). Two Showrooms of NTC's Coimbatore Division were closed in January and February, 1980 due to their uneconomic working.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) At the time of closure, the total value of stocks held by these Showrooms was Rs. 236,190.60, and no shortages were found.