

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: (a) The Government of India have seen in the newspapers a brief telegraphic summary of remarks said to have been made by Sir Thomas Holland on the occasion referred to. If he has been correctly reported in that summary he would seem to have had inadequate information of the facts.

In 1902 when a similar question was raised it was estimated that the withdrawal of restrictions on the manufacture of earth salt would result in an annual loss of salt revenue in the United Provinces alone which might amount (on a duty of Rs. 2) to as much as Rs. 44,00,000. What the loss all over India would be it is impossible to guess but it is certain that the figure would be extremely high. The annual cost of the Northern India preventive establishment on the other hand is less than 2½ lakhs of rupees, and proposals for reducing it are under consideration.

(b) In the circumstances the Government of India do not propose to abolish the restrictions.

(c) In view of the careful inquiry made in 1902 no need for a further investigation exists.

RAILWAY COLLIERIES.

698. ***Mr. Ahmad Ali Khan:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state how many collieries have been acquired and are being worked by railway agency?

(b) What, approximately, was the quantity of coal raised from such collieries last year?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: (a) Five.

(b) One million six hundred thousand tons.

TRAINING OF APPRENTICES IN RAILWAY WORKSHOPS.

699. ***Mr. Ahmad Ali Khan:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state how many workshops exist on the State and Company managed lines and how many apprentices are receiving training in each?

(b) Has any arrangement been made to provide technical classes for them during their period of apprenticeship?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: (a) I would refer the Honourable Member to paragraphs 34 and 56 of Volumes I of the Railway Administration Reports for 1921-22 and 1922-23, respectively.

The number of apprentices under training at the end of June, 1923, on the railways noted below was:

North Western	200
Eastern Bengal	94
Oudh and Rohilkhand	112
East Indian	276
Bombay, Baroda and Central India	360
Assam Bengal	20
Bengal and North Western	46
South Indian	35

The Great Indian Peninsula and Madras and Southern Mahratta Railways also train apprentices, but the figures for these lines are not available.

(b) Arrangements have been made to provide technical classes for the apprentices.