

17 were Indians were trained for the Department; the remaining 22 of whom 12 were Indians were trained for other authorities, such as the Indo-European Telegraph Department and Indian States. They were charged appropriate fees.

SALT FACTORIES IN MADRAS.

893. *Mr. K. Venkataramana Reddi: (a) Will the Government be pleased to state the number of salt manufacturing factories in the Madras Presidency?

(b) How many were abolished in 1923-24 and how many they propose to abolish in future?

(c) Will the Government be pleased to state the reason why they have been abolished?

(d) Have the Government received any memorial from Kaja Kodanda Ramiah Pantulu Garu, Nizampatam, Repalli taluq, Guntur district, in regard to the proposed closure of the salt factory at Nizampatam? If so, what action do the Government propose to take upon it?

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: (a), (b) and (c). The number of salt manufacturing factories in the Madras Presidency was 49 at the close of 1922-23. The Local Government have ordered the closure of 4 factories from the beginning of the 1924 season and they have no proposals for further closure at present under consideration. They report that these factories were very inconveniently situated with no proper means of communication. Their brine supply was unsatisfactory and their outturn poor, and the licensees were involved in heavy indebtedness to Government. It is also stated that in one case the soil was unsuitable, in another labour was not procurable and in a third heavy damage was done by the recent cyclone to the factory which is not worth repairing.

(d) The gentleman named addressed a memorial to the Government of India in January last but as it was not submitted through the Local Government as required by the rules for the submission of petitions to the Government of India, it was returned to the memorialist for compliance with the rules.

Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty: Is Government aware of the fact that very nearly 80 per cent. of the salt consumed in India is imported salt; and if so, has Government ever inquired into the possibility of meeting all the supply of salt from local manufacturers?

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: I am not certain about the first part of question 2. I believe the figures given are approximately correct. The reply to the second part is in the affirmative.

Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty: Have they considered the possibility of meeting all the demand in India by salt manufactured in India? I understand the Honourable Member answered in the affirmative, and if so, what is the conclusion arrived at,—what steps have they taken?

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: An inquiry took place about 1906. I do not carry in my mind the whole of its conclusions, but one may judge by the fact that since then imported salt has continued to come in, that they came to the conclusion that it is not possible to supply the whole from India.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: May I ask, Sir, if the report of the inquiry conducted in 1906 is available to the public?

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: I do not know; I will find out and will let the Honourable Member know.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Since that report was published, has there been any difference in the quantity of salt imported from foreign countries? Or has there been any reduction in the amount of salt imported into this country from foreign countries?

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: If the Honourable Member will study the sea-borne trade for the last 20 years, he will find out.

MILITARY, DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR EXPENDITURE IN PERSIA.

894. ***Mr. K. Venkataramana Reddi:** (a) What is the approximate total expenditure incurred on sending Indian troops to East Persia?

(b) What is the total amount of diplomatic and consular expenditure incurred by the Government of India in Persia during 1922-23?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) Military expenditure in East Persia was not recorded separately in the accounts and I regret, therefore, that it is not possible to furnish the information desired by the Honourable Member.

(b) Rs. 19,84,342.

Mr. Chaman Lal: On what ground do Government justify the expenditure in East Persia?

Mr. E. Burdon: There is no expenditure from Indian revenues at present at all.

Mr. Chaman Lal: On what grounds do Government justify the sending of Indian troops to East Persia?

Mr. President: The Honourable Member should give notice of the question.

EXPORT DUTY ON RAW HIDES AND SKINS.

895. ***Haji S. A. K. Jeelani:** (a) Will the Government be pleased to state who was responsible for the reduction of the duty on the export of raw skins and hides from 15 per cent. to 5 per cent. *ad valorem*?

(b) Are the Government aware that this reduction from 15 to 5 per cent. does not constitute a sufficient protection to the tanning industry? Have they received representation from anywhere to that effect?

(c) Is it a fact that the Director of Industries in Madras had expressed himself strongly against the reduction of the duty? If so, will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement of his views?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: (a) The Indian Legislature.

(b) Representations in the sense suggested have been received, but the Honourable Member should read the debates on the subject in this House last March.

(c) The Government have no information.