

(Part I—Questions and Answers)

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LOK SABHA

Thursday, 5th May, 1955

The Lok Sabha met at Half-Past Ten
of the Clock

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

MEMBER SWORN

Shri H. V. Kamath (Hoshangabad).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Short Notice Questions and Answers

SALT PRODUCTION

S.N.Q. No. 14. Shri M. D. Ramasami:
Will the Minister of Production be
pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that uncontrolled over-production of salt by unlicensed producers in Tuticorin area has affected the production of licensed factories, many of which have had to suspend production on account of un-economic competition and to accumulate large stocks of undisposed of salt;

(b) whether the proposal of Government to introduce from the 1st March, 1955 the system of restricting unlicensed production of salt to two and a half acres has been given up and if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that licensed manufacturers are experiencing difficulties in regard to transport while unlicensed manufacturers are in a better position in this regard; and

(d) the policy of Government in regard to unlicensed production of salt?

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy): (a) The increased production of salt by unlicensed producers

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in Tuticorin area has affected to some extent the production of licensed factories in that area and some licensed factories have had to suspend production, but according to the information available with the Salt Department, there is no accumulation of stocks with the licensed producers.

(b) Yes. The Government reviewed the whole position and came to the conclusion that the modification of 1948 concession by limiting the free production of salt to areas of 2½ acres or less would result in discouraging small producers who had established themselves with great effort. The Government have also decided to exempt from the payment of cess small scale licensed producers as well working in areas upto 10 acres. Encouragement of small scale producers has been the main reason for this decision.

(c) No; on the other hand, the licensed manufacturers are able to send their salt under preferential as well as ordinary traffic while the unlicensed manufacturers are able to send their salt under "ordinary booking" only.

(d) The concessions given to unlicensed producers of salt under the Press Note dated 23rd April, 1948 will remain unchanged.

Shri M. D. Ramasami: Are Government aware that for want of wagon facilities, large stocks of salt have accumulated in the licensed factories, and may I know whether early arrangements would be made for their movement?

Shri K. C. Reddy: That would be looked into.

Shri Thanu Pillai: What is the maximum capacity for an individual with a small family to produce salt? What is the acreage in which they can produce salt?

Shri K. C. Reddy: Ten acres; it is on that basis that 10 acres have been fixed in 1948.

Shri Thanu Pillai: May I know whether it is a fact that these small 10 acre-holders are employing other people and are not producing salt by themselves?

Shri K. C. Reddy: May be, in some cases it is happening.

Shri Mohiuddin: May I know whether the quality of the salt produced by the small producers is not upto the standard of the salt produced in big pans, and is that not coming in the way of introducing higher quality salt in India?

Shri K. C. Reddy: That is happening to some extent. Government are seriously considering the imposing of quality control on all salt produced in the country, whether licensed or unlicensed.

Shri V. Muniswamy: May I know whether it has come to the notice of Government that such difficulties are being experienced in other factories in the Madras State, like Marakkanam in the South Arcot district, and may I know whether Government propose to provide facilities to the factories such as afforestation, etc.?

Shri K. C. Reddy: That is a different question altogether. It does not arise here.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It does not arise.

Shri Nanadas: May I know what steps Government have taken to obviate the price differences between the unlicensed manufacture of salt and the licensed manufacture of salt?

Shri K. C. Reddy: That also does not arise.

Shri V. Muniswamy: May I know whether it has come to the notice of Government that the workers in the Tuticorin factory are suffering for want of sweet water?

Shri K. C. Reddy: I should like to have notice.

Shri Barman: May I know whether the producers of salt in this cottage industry sector, that is, below 10 acres, are selling their salt at a lower price and therefore, competition is worrying the bigger factories?

Shri K. C. Reddy: May be, they produce at a lesser cost because they have been exempted from the payment of cess. Naturally, they would be able to sell at a lower price.

Shri Thanu Pillai: May I know whether the small producers have been subjected to examination of the quality of salt?

Shri K. C. Reddy: No.

Shri M. D. Ramasami: May I know whether Government are aware of the fact that the price of salt has gone down miserably in recent months affecting the economy of the licensed producers, and if so, what steps do Government propose to take to stabilise the prices?

Shri K. C. Reddy: I should like to have notice.

Shri V. Muniswamy: May I know whether it is a fact that a memorandum was submitted to the hon. Minister during his visit to Travancore stating that because the salt produced in Tuticorin was being dumped into Travancore, the workers there are suffering a lot, and if so, may I know whether Government have taken any action in this direction because of competition?

Shri K. C. Reddy: Yes. A memorandum was submitted. I beg to submit that these questions do not arise out of the main question.

NORTH EAST FRONTIER AGENCY

S.N.Q. No. 15. Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state: