

Weekly Notes

No PRO for Bombay Customs Yet

REGARDING the appointment of public relations officers at the major customs houses, which was discussed in these columns in the issue of 8th last Mr A. N. Sattanathan, the Collector of Customs, Bombay, has informed us that "a Public Relations Officer is being appointed to function in this Custom House with effect from I-IO-1951." The Ministry of Finance (Revenue Division) press note in question, bearing the date line New Delhi, July 31, 1951, which was released by the Press Information Bureau, stated as follows:

"In pursuance of their general policy to provide greater facilities to the public, the Government of India had already appointed, as an experimental measure, Public Relations Officers at the major Customs Houses. These Public Relations Officers have been found to be of considerable assistance to the public."

The press note did not say that a PRO was *being* appointed in Bombay, and as such it is incorrect and misleading at best. The least that the Ministry of Finance can do to improve its public relations is to own up its mistake. At what other

of "scarce and dollar-worthy commodities." Economic sanctions have had a boomerang effect. They have furnished Moscow with an opportunity to appear at Teheran as a Santa Claus. Soviet Russia has promised Persia help in the commodities whose deliveries Britain has cut off. Increasingly it becomes obvious that London is harbouring delusions. Because Dr Mussadiq has not been able to form a quorum in the Majlis, London has pumped to the elusion that he is a back number. Dr Mussadiq may be overthrown, but it is ridiculous to hope that his successor would, or could, be more tractable. This is to misinterpret the political mood and temper of Persia. Awareness of both Britain and of Persia of the explosive situation which both now face is reflected in their joint requests to President Truman to use his "good offices" to avert an armed conflict. Hope lingers that wiser counsel would yet prevail, and an unnecessary war would be avoided—a war which could only provide Russia with an opportunity to fish in troubled waters.

major customs houses besides Bombay, PROs have, been appointed it would be necessary to know, to find out if they have really been "of considerable assistance to the public" as is claimed by the Finance Ministry.

Sulphur Deposits in Karwar

F the pyrite deposits, the occurrence of which was reported last week in Kaiga, Karwar District in Bombay State, turn out to be half as rich as it is now give nout to be, and proves commercially workable, India may some day become an exporter of sulphur, instead of being dependent on America for the whole of her requirements for this strategic material. Sulphur is now one of the major shortages of the Commonwealth countries and is subject to allocation by International Materials Conference.

The deposits, it is reported, extend over twelve miles in the village Kaiga, and contain 51 per cent sulphur, 5 per cent nickel and 1 per cent copper. The occurrence of nickel with sulphur is extremely unusual; not so its occurrence with

opper.' We "are short in all three, and though these mines may not substantially contribute, towards overcoming our shortage in copper, if it yields as much nickel as is now expected, this alone should make for a considerable improvement in our non-ferrous metals situation.

Nickel is another of our strategic shortages, being largely used for coinage, in the production of munitions and in electrical industries. In fact, one of the arguments for adoption of nickel coinage in this country was that thereby we would be building up an emergency reserve of this scarce and strategic metal.

The estimate has been hazarded, on what authority it is not known, that 10,000 tons of ore could be mined every month from the Kaiga" deposits to yield 4,000 tons of sulphur. This sounds too good to be true, since our annual requirements are around 40,000 tons which is now obtained mainly from the USA in the form of rock sulphur. The manufacture of sulphuric acid accounts for 70 per cent of the consumption of sulphur in this country.

The reported discovery of ilmenite and sulphur in such quick succession within a week of each other, both on the western coast, confirms

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