

within the hard currency or soft currency.

Shri C. D. Deshmukh: It was included in the soft currency areas.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know whether the trade agreements are sought to be concluded individually with these countries belonging to the U.S.S.R. group or with all the total countries combined.

Shri Karmarkar: With each individual country, naturally.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know how payment has been made to Russia for their export of Communism to this country?

Mr. Speaker: He need not answer that question.

Shri A. C. Guha: May I know if any of these countries have got special trade agencies here?

Shri Karmarkar: I think so. Str. Through their embassies, they carry on these things and some of them have got trade agencies.

Shri Velayudhan: May I know whether any facilities are given for trading with Soviet Russia by private individuals between these two countries and whether any exchange facilities are given by the Government?

Shri Karmarkar: As the hon. Member is aware, ours is an absolutely free country and we are giving all possible help to private traders also.

Shri Velayudhan: My question has not been answered, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: He must take it for what it is worth.

Bidi LABOUR

*315. **Shri K. C. Sodhia:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate number of persons engaged in bidi making in the country under the heads:—

(i) manufacturers (ii) middle men and (iii) workers; and

(b) whether the provisions of any of the different Acts enacted during the last four years for labour welfare have been applied to bidi labour and if not, why not?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) and (b). The State Governments have been requested to furnish the necessary information which, when received, will be placed on the Table of the House.

I may, however, add some information which is relevant and it may be useful to hon. Members of this House. Bidi making industry is covered by the Minimum Wages Act. The Employment of Children Act 1939 also applies to the workshops connected with bidi making, which prohibits the employment of children below the age of 12. The bidi making establishments which are non-power establishments are governed by the Factories Act, in case they employ 20 or more persons. Some of the State Governments regulate bidi making concerns employing less than 20 workers to the Shops and Commercial Establishments Act. Almost all the State Governments who are primarily concerned with this industry have taken legislative measures to regulate the working conditions in the industry either to the Municipalities Act or to special enactments like the Unregulated Factories Act.

Shri K. C. Sodhia: Do the Government of India require periodical reports from the State Governments concerned over the application of these various Acts?

Shri V. V. Giri: We have asked the State Governments to supply the fullest information and when we secure it, we shall place it on the Table of the House.

Shri Namdhari: May I ask if Government intends to discourage this trade in the country, which is a waste of finance and which is an evil that reduces the constitution of the youths to a war-quality standard?

Mr. Speaker: He need not reply to that.

Shri B. Shiva Rao: May I ask whether any occupational diseases of bidi labour have been listed in order to extend to the workers the benefits of the Workmen's Compensation Act?

Shri V. V. Giri: I would like to have notice of this question.

Shri Venkataraman: Are the Government aware that the employers try to evade the Factories Act by employing contractors and if so, what steps do Government propose to take in this respect?

Shri V. V. Giri: Government will certainly take measures but my hon. friends, the trade unionists have a duty in this matter to see that the various Act are implemented properly with respect to the bidi workers.

Shri Nambiar: May I know what steps the Government of India are

taking to encourage the bidi industry in view of the fact that the industry is in a dying stage now?

Shri V. V. Giri: I do not know whether it is correct information, but I take it from the hon. Member.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know whether the Government is aware that in Madras children even below the age of 12 are being used and false ages are given?

Shri V. V. Giri: I take it that the State Government is trying its best to see that the provisions of the Act are properly implemented.

TRADE WITH CANADA

*316. **Shri M. R. Krishna:** (a) Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state whether this country has any trade relations with Canada?

(b) If so, what are the articles exported to Canada?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement furnishing the required information is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 21.]

SHIP-BUILDING

*317. **Shri M. R. Krishna:** Will the Minister of Works, Production and Supply be pleased to state whether any attempt has been made to build war ships in India?

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy): No attempt has been made.

Shri M. R. Krishna: How long will it take to produce war ships in India?

Shri K. C. Reddy: I cannot tell definitely how soon we will be able to produce warships. The whole matter is in the planning stage. I am afraid I am not in a position to divulge any further information in the public interest.

Shri Nambiar: In view of the fact that India has not got large ships, may I know whether ships required for commercial purposes will be given preference?

Shri K. C. Reddy: Yes; we are building commercial ships only. The question of building naval warships will be taken up later.

BALANCE OF TRADE

*318. **Shri Barman:** (a) Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state the balance of trade position in April—December, 1951?

(b) To what extent is it affected by shipping freights paid on imports and exports?

(c) How is the shipping freight distributed between Indian and non-Indian shipping companies?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) Balance of Trade position in the period April-December 1951. was as follows:

(In crores of Rupees)		
Imports	Exports and re-exports	Balance.
695.39	563.39	132.00

(b) and (c). Information is not readily available with the Government. I am afraid the expenditure of time and effort required to collect it will not be commensurate with the results likely to be achieved.

Shri Barman: Is the Government in a position to give some idea as to the increase in the tonnage of Indian shipping in the last two or three years?

Shri Karmarkar: I should require notice.

Shri Barman: May I know whether the Indian shipping companies get enough load in their trade with other countries both in their outgoing and incoming journey? Will the Government keep an eye on Indian shipping companies getting enough load?

Shri Karmarkar: I think these questions may be addressed to the proper Ministry on proper notice.

Shri Barman: May I know whether the Government keeps an eye as to whether the goods that come from other countries, that is goods that are imported into India, are insured with Indian companies?

Shri Karmarkar: I think Government are taking all possible steps in the interests of Indian shipping. I am afraid I am not competent to answer all these questions....

Mr. Speaker: He need not try to answer. I am saying that the question is too wide and goes into too many details. It is not also covered by the question.