

employed varies from month to month. On a comparison in previous months, I think in the month of December, the total number of workers, if I remember aright—I cannot speak to the correctness of the figure—came down to 261,000 which meant about 10,000 to 11,000 less than the corresponding period in the previous year. But that does not necessarily mean that there has been any wholesale retrenchment.

Shri Meghnad Saha: Does not the hon. Minister think it necessary that in order that the.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: All this is a matter of opinion. He may put a question to elicit facts.

Shri Meghnad Saha: It has got a relevance, Sir.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Opinions, suggestions and inferences are not allowed. Any question may be put to elicit a fact. The hon. member is asking for an opinion.

Shri Meghnad Saha: Has the hon. Minister inquired into the research activities of the different laboratories of the All India Central Jute Committee, and is he aware that on account of this economy drive the salaries of most of them have been reduced and most of them are not working?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: Sir, this has nothing to do with modernisation of the machinery which is the basis of the question.

Shri A. C. Guha: May I know, Sir, if Government have considered the matter in view of some modern jute mills being established in East Bengal and some other parts of Asia?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: Government are aware, Sir, that modernisation has to take place before long if we are to maintain our competitive position, and there is no dispute on that point. The question is, how to do it in order not to displace any large number of workers, and secondly, how is the financing to be done? These questions, Sir, are engaging the attention of Government. We have not settled any final policy as yet.

HINDUSTAN SHIPYARD

*659. **Shri M. L. Dwivedi:** (a) Will the Minister of Production be pleased to state the improvement which has been effected or is likely to be effected in the ship-building activities at Vishakhapatnam since Government have taken over the yard from the Scindias?

(b) How many ships have been built by the yard so far?

(c) What is the plan for the ensuing financial year?

(d) What is the number of employees who have been retained since the change-over, and what is the number of those who left for one reason or the other?

(e) Has there been or is there likely to be any change in the scales of pay and wages of the workers of the yard?

(f) Will they be provided with work all round the year?

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy): (a) Hindusthan Shipyard Ltd., in which Government have a two-thirds share, have taken over the Visakhapatnam Shipyard from 1st March 1952. Since then, the third berth has been completed and a 35-Ton Crane fully erected. An agreement has been concluded with a French firm of shipbuilders for technical assistance. Their proposals for the further development of the yard forwarded to Hindusthan Shipyard Ltd. by the firm are expected to be received shortly.

(b) The yard has so far built 11 ships, consisting of ten 8,000 tonners and one small passenger vessel of about 300 tons.

(c) Two 8,000 tonners are at present under construction and the yard has orders for five 7,000 tonners and two 8,000 tonners, which are expected to be completed during the next two years. These seven ships will be of a new design and will have diesel engines.

(d) The number of employees on the date of taking over, i.e. 1st March 1952, was 3735. On the 1st February, 1953 it had decreased to 3697, the difference being due to discharges on account of death, resignation and dismissal.

(e) Since the yard was taken over by the Government the one-third cut in dearness allowance which had earlier been voluntarily accepted by the labour and staff has been restored.

(f) At present about half the workmen in the yard are without work although they are being paid their wages in full. Part of this idleness is due to temporary causes like shortage of steel plates, in which India is at present deficient. About 800 to 900 men are reckoned to be surplus to the requirements of the yard even after its working capacity is increased from

building the two and half to four ships a year

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: May I know, Sir, how far is the report correct, if at all, that the ship-building activities in this Yard have slackened since the change-over?

Shri K. C. Reddy: The answer is already implicit, Sir, in the one that I have given just now. Work has slackened to some extent because of the shortage in the matter of supply of steel. Apart from that, there has been no slackening of work in the Shipyard.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: May I know, Sir, if the employees and workers of the shipyard have got work all round the year, or if not, for what period they are idle, and why?

Shri K. C. Reddy: That cannot be answered categorically in a single sentence. In the Shipyard at present a certain number of labour is classed as what is known as 'allocated labour' and a certain number as 'unallocated labour'. It depends upon the quantum of work that is there in the Shipyard from time to time.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know, Sir, the total cost of the proposals made by the French firm?

Shri K. C. Reddy: The total cost of the proposals? No figure has been struck like that. The French firm have submitted a report only recently to the company and the Government are yet to receive it. And so far as I know, the cost side of it has not been worked out so far. But I may as well inform the hon. member that a provision of 14 crores of rupees has been made in the Five Year Plan for the development of the Shipyard.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: Do I understand, Sir, that during the Scindia Steam Navigation Co's management of the Shipyard there were plenty of steel plates available, but not now?

Shri K. C. Reddy: Well, Sir, I cannot give the exact amount of steel that was available at the time that Scindia's were managing the Shipyard and what is being supplied now. But this is a fact that during the last year there has been a breakdown in the Rollingmill of the Tata Iron & Steel Company, and there has been a shortage in the supply of steel plates.

Shri B. S. Murthy: Arising out of the answer of the hon. Minister, Sir, that nearly 800 workers will be thrown out of work even if the whole ship-building yard is in full swing, may I

know what are the proposals of the Government to provide full employment for all these 3000 and odd workers?

Shri K. C. Reddy: That subject is under the consideration of Government.

Shri Nanadas: May I know, Sir, What are the monthly requirements of steel plates for that shipyard?

Shri K. C. Reddy: I am afraid I cannot oblige the hon. Member by giving the quantity just now.

Shri Raghavachari: May I know what is the monthly bill of the workers that are retained?

Shri K. C. Reddy: I am sorry I have not got the exact figure, Sir.

Shri Punnoose: The hon. Minister said that steel is in short supply. May I know the steps taken by Government to get the necessary quantity?

Shri K. C. Reddy: The Government have appointed a special officer for this purpose, a Liaison Officer who has been stationed at the Tata Iron and Steel Co, in order to expedite the supply of steel from the Company to the Yard. We have also taken steps to import steel from abroad.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know the basis on which the workers are being categorised as allocated and non-allocated?

Shri K. C. Reddy: Sir, the nature of the work from time to time is assessed with the help of the French Experts who are there on the site and on that basis the allocation or non-allocation is done.

POWER ALCOHOL

*660. **Shri B. K. Das:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) what would be the cost of a plant for production of power alcohol from agricultural waste; and

(b) what would be the comparative cost of power alcohol produced from the waste and from other sources?

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): (a) and (b). Government have no information.

Shri B. K. Das: Was there any discussion about this matter in the Lucknow Seminar in November last and was the Government of India represented there?