

lines is taken up, the opinion of State Governments is taken or the Railway Department themselves decide the construction of new lines?

**The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri):** The opinion of State Governments is always taken and in fact we have addressed all the State Governments to indicate their priority as well as a list of new lines which they want to be constructed in their States.

#### DELEGATION TO AFGHANISTAN

**\*1234. Shri K. C. Sodhia:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Indian Service personnel have been deputed to Afghanistan to operate the Communications and Meteorological Stations at Kabul;

(b) if so, their number and the period of deputation; and

(c) whether any financial liability devolves on Government in respect of the deputationists and if so, how much?

**The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur):** (a) to (c). The question of rendering assistance to the Afghanistan Government in the establishment of Aeronautical Communication and meteorological facilities at Kabul and Kandahar by providing necessary equipment and technical personnel to install and operate it, is under consideration. Negotiations in the matter are still in progress with the Government of Afghanistan.

**Shri K. C. Sodhia:** Are such negotiations in progress with any other country?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** The case of Afghanistan is a peculiar one because necessary facilities have to be provided there and they stand in need of technical personnel, equipment etc. Negotiations with them are under way. I do not know whether we stand in that relation with any other country at the moment.

#### DISPLACED RAILWAY EMPLOYEES

**\*1235. Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question No. 1581 asked on the 5th April, 1954 and state:

(a) whether the examination of the judgment of Bombay High Court wherein it was held that "Railway Employees who had opted for service in Pakistan and made their final choice in favour of service in India within prescribed time were entitled to their wages from the day they reported on duty", has since been concluded;

(b) if so, the decision arrived at; and

(c) the number of such employees who have not been paid such wages?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan):** (a) to (c). The matter is under consideration.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** May I know when this protracted consideration will reach a stage of finality because this question has been hanging fire for well over five years and it has been raised in this very House so many times?

**Shri Alagesan:** The hon. Member himself put a question and referred to the judgment of the Bombay High Court as a result of which this matter has now come under consideration. This judgment, I understand, has been delivered in the third week of March, 1954, as the hon. Member himself has mentioned in the last question. So, Sir, it is only a few months that we have been considering this matter.

**Shri Sadhan Gupta:** In view of the fact that this question of provisional optees to Pakistan has created dissatisfaction not only among the employees concerned, but among the minority communities also, do Government propose to hasten the consideration and can Government say by which time the consideration will be finished?

**Shri Alagesan:** In consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs we are considering this question. Though I may not be able to indicate the time-limit, I can assure the hon. Member that we will do it as quickly as possible.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** Part (c) is not answered yet.

**Mr. Speaker:** He can put a separate question later.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** The number of such employees, mentioned in part (c), cannot be under consideration.

**Mr. Speaker:** What is the reply to part (c)?

**Shri Alagesan:** Twenty-three employees took the case to the High Court.

#### INDIAN SHIPPING

\*1236. **Mulla Abdullahai:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether the target fixed for shipping tonnage at the end of the Plan period is likely to be reached; and

(b) the extent of loans given so far by Government to the various Shipping Companies for this purpose?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan):** (a) Yes.

(b) A statement giving the required information is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [See Appendix VIII, annexure No. 3.]

**Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad:** May I know the target up till now achieved in the three years' plan?

**Shri Alagesan:** To begin with, the tonnage was 3,90,000. The tonnage added up to date was 1,49,000. Tonnage scrapped within this period from the beginning of the Plan period is 60,000. The net addition up to now is 89,000, but we have been advancing loans to private shipping

companies who have been arranging purchases and we hope to reach the target of 6,00,000 tons before the Five Year Plan period is over.

**Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad:** The figures just quoted are difficult to follow. May I therefore know the percentage of the total achieved so far during these three years out of the five-year period.

**Shri Alagesan:** As I said, the companies are in the process of making purchases. They began with 3,90,000 tons.

**Mr. Speaker:** The difficulty of the hon. Minister, as I see it, is that the matter is partly in the hands of private companies.

**Shri Alagesan:** More than 90 per cent. is in the hands of private companies.

**Mr. Speaker:** He is, therefore, unable to give the answer.

**Shri U. C. Patnaik:** In view of the fact that there has not been proper response to the loans advanced to private companies, is there any proposal to encourage an increase in the tonnage by adopting the practice prevailing in other countries where loans are being granted for ship-building at very low or nominal rates of interest, repayable within a very long period, subject to the condition that the construction conforms to the design put forward by naval experts?

**Shri Alagesan:** I have already informed the House that all this is being done by Government now. We are aiding companies to place orders on the Hindustan Shipyard and Government pays, as a subsidy, the difference between the U.K. parity price and the actual cost of the Hindustan Shipyard. In addition to this, we have given long-term loan to shipping companies to place orders abroad or to have ships constructed in foreign shipyards.