

Shri Kanungo: There is no contemplation to start a branch workshop or any more workshops at the moment. At the moment, we are considering the setting up of a workshop in Delhi.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: In view of the fact that many of these small machine-tools are being manufactured on a decentralised scale in Ludhiana, may I know whether the help of the German and the help of these small institutions will be made available for this particular workshop to be started in Delhi?

Shri Kanungo: So far as Ludhiana and Batala are concerned, we are having extension centres, but this one is mainly expected to design new machines and build prototypes which will be reproduced elsewhere.

Political Leaders' Broadcasts from A.I.R.

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 *975. { **Shri A. K. Gopalan:**
Shri Velayudhan:
Shri D. C. Sharma:
Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:
Sardar Iqbal Singh:
Sardar Akarpuri:

Will the Minister of Information and Broadcasting be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 1905 on 8th September, 1956 and state:

(a) whether the scheme to invite the leaders of different political parties in India to broadcast from All India Radio has since been finalised; and

(b) if so, its nature?

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Dr. Keskar): This matter is under the consideration of Government and the decision is expected to be taken immediately. I hope to make a statement on this question within the course of the next two or three days.

Shri Kamath: Not months!

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know whether the decision will be in favour of the political leaders broadcasting from A. I. R.?

Dr. Keskar: As I said, it is only within two or three days that I expect to know the Government decision. My hon. friend is trying to ask me to forestall that decision and tell him something, which it will not be possible for me just now.

Shri Kamath: May I request that when the decision is announced, here it will be in the form of a statement on which questions can be raised—not just a statement and no more?

Mr. Speaker: Thereafter let us see. Let him make a statement. Then, if necessary, I will allow some other date for questions.

India's Foreign Trade

*976. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Industries be pleased to state:

(a) what percentage of India's overseas trade is carried in Indian vessels;

(b) what percentage of the Indian vessels carrying Indian trade passes through the Suez Canal; and

(c) what percentage of the foreign-vessels carrying Indian trade have been rerouted *via* Cape of Good Hope?

The Minister of Trade (Shri Karmarkar): (a) and (b). No precise information is or can be available. The share of Indian Shipping in India's overseas trade is estimated to be of the order of 5-6 per cent. Two-thirds of the cargo carried by Indian ships is believed to have passed through the Suez Canal in 1955.

(c) It is impossible to calculate the percentage. All the foreign vessels proceeding in the westerly direction have been re-routed *via* the Cape.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: The hon. Minister says that it is not possible to give a precise estimate. May I know whether he can give any rough estimate as to what extent of our foreign trade has been affected by the closure of the Suez Canal?

Shri Karmarkar: The rough estimate of the share of Indian shipping in India's overseas trade I have given in the original answer as 5 to 6 per cent.

Shri Kamath: What are the prospects for the clearance of this Canal for normal navigation? Are they very bright in the near future or will it take time?

Shri Karmarkar: We are hoping that there are bright prospects for its clearance as early as possible.

Shri Kamath: The Prime Minister is not here. Otherwise he would have told us more about it.

Shri R. P. Garg: May I know whether any of our vessels have been re-routed since the closure of the Suez Canal and, if so, what is the increase in freight?

Shri Karmarkar: As I said, all the mercantile ships have been re-routed. But as regards the name of any Indian ship or shipping so re-routed I would like to have notice.