

choice of any firm for such collaboration has not arisen since a decision on the establishment of such a plant is yet under consideration.

SHRI V. G. GOPAL: Is it a fact that there is already a Government-owned synthetic petrol plant in Jamshedpur?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: No, Sir; I am not aware of any such plant. There is a benzol plant of Tatas. It is different from the synthetic petrol plant.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: What is the report of the Committee? Have they recommended in favour of setting up such a plant?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: They have recommended that it is desirable to set up such a plant.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: Have not there been committees previously appointed also to go into the same question and those committees had also recommended in favour of the establishment of such a plant?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: Yes, it is true; but there are other aspects also which one has to keep in mind when dealing with a subject of this kind, such as finance, priority and all that. Therefore, at that time it was not considered desirable to go into this matter. The Government constituted again a Committee in order to ascertain the latest processes and the latest condition of this industry and to recommend to the Government, in the light of the altered circumstances, as to what should be the policy of Government.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: Does the hon. Minister recognize that it is one of the basic industries and that its development will also help other industries and that it should be taken up immediately?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Government certainly recognise that petrol is an essential commodity, but the whole question is of spending a very large sum of money—apart from

the details of it—a sum of money which may be a hundred crores. Hon. Members will realise that when an expenditure of a hundred crores of rupees is involved, one should consider carefully the priority, what is more essential for the time being. I can give no opinion, because the Report has just come, two or three days ago. There is a minute of dissent also attached to it. We have to take all that into consideration.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: I presume that economically and financially it has been found that it is not a proposition which is not feasible; in other words, it is a feasible proposition.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I do not know what my hon. friend means by "economically feasible"—it means the price of synthetic petrol that is produced. I imagine that should be a feasible proposition, but then there are so many other factors. Suppose we find petrol in India itself. Suppose also that in the course of the next five, six, seven or eight years other forms of power come into use which are much cheaper, power derived from atomic energy. These are not merely fantastic speculations, they are within the region of consideration at least.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Next question.

AMALGAMATION OF SMALL COLLIERY UNITS

♦542. SHRI RATANLAL KISHORI-LAL MALVIYA: Will the Minister for PRODUCTION be pleased to state the steps which Government have taken so far to implement the recommendation of the Working Party for the Coal Industry for the amalgamation of small colliery units into "economic units"?

THE MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION (SHRI K. C. REDDY) : The views of the Colliery Associations and of the Bihar and West Bengal Governments have been obtained on the recommendation and the matter is now under the consideration of Government.

SHRI RATANLAL KISHORILAL MALVIYA: May I know the reasons why the Working Party wanted the amalgamation of small colliery units?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: I would like to refer the hon. Member to the Report itself in which all the reasons have been detailed by the Working Party. The reason why Government have not been able to act upon that recommendation either immediately or even after the lapse of one or two years is because of the complicated nature of the problem. The views that we have received from the various Colliery Associations and the respective State Governments have been conflicting, have been at variance, and so we are applying our mind to this question in all its aspects and I hope we will be able to come to a decision at an early date.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: Does the hon. Minister consider that in view of the conflicting opinions and the present position of the coal industry in the country, the best solution would be nationalisation of the industry?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: That is a different question altogether, Sir.

ADDITIONAL EXCISE DUTY ON DHOTIES

*543. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state what was the amount realised by Government in 1953-54 by way of additional excise <duty on dhoties issued in excess of the permissible quota fixed by the Textile Commissioner in respect of each mill?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI T. T. KRISHNA-MACHARI): The final figures are not available. Early this month, in answer to a similar question in the Lok Sabha, the answer given was about Rs. 942,000. After further scrutiny, the Finance Ministry tells me that the figure is likely to be less. The figures are being reconciled but no final figure can be given at this stage.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: May I know, Sir, whether this amount also is earmarked or allotted for the development of khadi and handloom industry?

SHRI T. T. KRISHNAMACHARI: No, Sir.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: Is it not a fact, Sir, that this duty is levied to encourage the khadi and handloom industry?

SHRI T. T. KRISHNAMACHARI: That is a possible interpretation, Sir.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: Is it not to encourage those industries? I want a categorical answer.

SHRI T. T. KRISHNAMACHARI: I think that is a possibility. I cannot give an answer which will be categorical.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Next question.

SHRI D. NARAYAN: Sir, I want to put a question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There are 33 questions today for answering and we must proceed quickly. Next question.

*544. [*The questioner (Shri V. K. Dhage) was absent. For answer vide col. 3713 infra.*]

EAST GERMAN TRADE DELEGATION TO INDIA

*545. SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: Will the Minister for COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any East German Trade Delegation has arrived in India recently with a view to negotiate a trade agreement between India and East Germany; and

(b) if so, whether negotiations in this regard have concluded?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI T. T. KRISHNA-MACHARI): (a) and (b). A Trade Delegation has recently arrived from