

almost on the point of refusing them permission to expand.

*207. [*The questioner (Shri H. C. Mathur) was absent.*]

RETRENCHMENT OF SURPLUS LABOUR IN THE RAILWAY COLLIERIES

*208. SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: Will the Minister for PRODUCTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the surplus labour proposed to be retrenched in the railway collieries is engaged on direct labour, i.e., on actual hewing of coal, or on indirect auxiliary services;

(b) whether after the retrenchment of the surplus labour the railway collieries are expected to reduce their losses or to show profits; and

(c) whether the railway collieries are able to supply all the coal required by the railways?

THE MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION (SHRI K. C. REDDY): (a) The surplus labour falls under various categories of unskilled, surface and underground workers and a few skilled workers. The strength of surplus labour in each of the above categories is not readily available.

(b) While some of the railway collieries are running at a loss, the others are running at a profit, but taken as a whole the railway collieries are running on an economic basis. With the retrenchment of surplus labour there will be a reduction in cost and this will in the main reduce the losses of those individual units which are working at a loss and enable also the more economic units to realise their full potential profit.

(c) No. The railway collieries supply only about 25 per cent. of the total coal requirement of the Railways.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: May I know, Sir, for how long these men were being borne on the pay rolls of the railway collieries as being surplus to their requirements?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: This has a long past, Sir. It is since 1948-49 that the existence of the surplus labour has been within the knowledge of the Government. Several committees were set up to go into this question. The Railway Collieries Enquiry Committee went into this question first and assessed the surplus labour. It was stated thereafter that most of this labour might be fictitious labour which is not actually there but which is shown in the registers. So a new committee was set up which was a fact-finding committee and they also submitted their report at the end of last year. Thereafter Government passed orders to retrench this surplus labour which was one of the main reasons for the collieries working at a loss. But then there was an industrial dispute pending in regard to the payment of wages for the Independence Day and the Republic Day. Since the industrial dispute was pending, we could not proceed with the retrenchment of the surplus labour. So we applied to the tribunal at Dhanbad and secured permission to do so. But then labour went and appealed to the Appellate Tribunal at Calcutta and then that Appellate Tribunal turned down the award of the Dhanbad Tribunal on technical grounds. So we are now taking steps to overcome that technical difficulty pointed out by the Appellate Tribunal and as soon as that work is over we propose to proceed with the reduction of the surplus labour.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: Sir, may I also know for how many years the railway collieries have been suffering a loss?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: They have not been suffering losses continuously. The results of operations over various areas have been varying. From 1936 up to 1954 in some years there has been a profit; in some there has been a loss. For example from 1945 to 1949 there were decent profits. Again there were losses in 1950 and 1951. Now in 1952, and 1953-54 we are on the plus side.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: With reference to answer (c) can the hon.

Minister kindly inform us whether the retrenched surplus railway labour can be re-engaged for the direct hewing of coal at less wages so that the coal output of the railway collieries may increase at less cost.

SHRI K. C. REDDY: Yes, Sir, the whole question has been gone into very carefully. It is not as if we can increase the output of coal suddenly and absorb all this surplus labour. Moreover, the working conditions of the other collieries also has to a certain extent to be taken into account. If we, for example increase the output in these railway collieries and absorb this surplus labour it may result in some other collieries closing down and creating surplus labour there. So the whole question is rather a complicated one and we have got to make a comprehensive approach to this question.

PRODUCTION IN D.D.T. FACTORY

*209. SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: Will the Minister for Production be pleased to state the probable date when the D.D.T. factory will go into production?

THE MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION (SHRI K. C. REDDY): The factory is expected to go into production by about the middle of 1954.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: Arising out of the answer given, I can take it that in that case the statement at page 95 of the Explanatory Memorandum on the Budget for 1953-54 that the factory will go into production before the end of 1953 is not correct.

SHRI K. C. REDDY: That was correct at the time the statement was made, Sir, but the position has changed now. It is not because of any defect or any shortcoming on the part of the Government. The W.H.O. and the U.N.I.C.E.F. have collaborated with us. They took some time to approve the plans of the buildings, etc., etc., and so we could not proceed with the construction of the building. Yesterday, I was there on the spot and I can

assure the hon. Member and the House that every effort will be made to construct this building as quickly as possible and to start the factory going.

DR. W. S. BARLINGAY: What is the amount actually spent on this so far?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: I cannot give you the exact figure now, Sir, but the entire cost of the plant etc. will be borne by the U.N.I.C.E.F. and the cost of the technical personnel mostly will be borne by W.H.O. and we will be called upon to put in only a part of the capital outlay. I am sorry I cannot give now the exact figure of the capital required to build the factory.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: What are the respective contributions of the W.H.O., the U.N.I.C.E.F. and the Government of India?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: I am sorry I am not in a position to give the break-up of the figures now.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Is it not a fact that though the Government of India are paying the major share, the W.H.O. and the U.N.I.C.E.F. are controlling the whole affair?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: This should not be considered as a concern where those two bodies have come in for any private purpose or anything like that. They have come here to help us and they are putting in quite a lot of money and giving us the benefit of the technical know-how, and for the management a Board of Directors is proposed to be set up, after a private company is constituted. And on the Board most of the Directors will be Government nominees including the Chairman.

SHRI K. C. REDDY: What is the question, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We pay the major share. They control. That is the question.

SHRI K. C. REDDY: That is not a fact.