

tegy in which primacy will be given to the development of agriculture, agro-industries, small and cottage industries especially in rural areas. High priority will also be given to the provision of minimum needs in rural areas and to integrated rural development.

Statement

Number of job-seekers on the Live Register of Employment Exchanges as on 31st December, 1976 classified by age-groups.

(In thousands)

Age-group	Number on Live Register as on 31-12-1976.
1. Upto 19 years	2900.2
2. 20-24 years	3055.2
3. 25-34 years	3225.8
4. 35-44 years	509.1
5. 45-54 years	80.0
6. 55 years and above . .	14.0
TOTAL	9784.3

NOTE:—1. All the job-seekers on the Live Register of Employment Exchanges are not necessarily unemployed.

2. Data showing the age-wise distribution of job-seekers on the Live Register are being collected annually at the end of December each year.

No-War Pact with Pakistan

717. SHRI F. P. GAEKWAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any positive response to India's renewed offer to sign a

no-war pact with Pakistan has been received; and

(b) what steps Government propose to take to protect the security and integrity of the country as a result of massive arms supply to Pakistan by U.S. Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): (a) and (b). According to press reports, the Pakistan Prime Minister has said there are some pre-conditions before Pakistan agrees to sign a specific no-war pact with India.

Government have been in touch with US Government regarding proposals for the supply of sophisticated military equipment to Pakistan. According to latest information, one such proposal has been called off, following President Carter's new policy of arms restraint.

Compulsorily retired officers of P&T, Andhra Circle

718. SHRIMATI AHILYA P. PAN-GNEKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether eight Office bearers of Postal Class III Union in Andhra Circle were compulsorily retired in 1967 for having associated with the issue of a circular containing complaints against the SPO, Kurnool;

(b) whether out of eight, three have been taken back on duty; and

(c) if so, whether remaining five will also be taken back on duty; and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir, but their compulsory retirement ordered in 1966 was based on their conduct having led to conviction on a criminal charge by a court for publishing a defamatory pamphlet against the

then Superintendent of Post Offices, Kurnool.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The petitions for taking back on duty received from four of the remaining five are being considered on merits. The fifth was an Extra Departmental official who has not submitted any petition so far.

Steel Targets

719. SHRI SOMNATH
CHATTERJEE:

SHRI S. R. DAMANI:
SHRI D. D. DESAI:
SHRI VASANT SATHE:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether long-term targets for steel industry are being scaled down as reported in a New Delhi daily dated 24th April, 1977; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK):

(a) and (b). No definite long-term targets for steel industry have so far been laid down. Any question of scaling down of the targets therefore does not arise.

2. In the White Paper laid on the table of the House in May 1976, it had been indicated that the total global capacity for steel making was likely to increase by about 300 million tonnes in the next 25 years and therefore for our share of this additional world capacity, a tentative target of about 75 million tonnes could be considered. For this purpose SAIL had been entrusted with the task of preparing a 25 year plan. This entire question has been re-examined since the formation of the new government and it has been decided that such a long term-term plan cannot be prepared in isolation

for the steel sector only and has to be dovetailed into the overall plan for the economic and industrial development of the country and would, therefore, require a fresh look for close integration with the new thinking of the Planning Commission.

Purchase of Microwave Telephone Lines from Japan

720. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in 1975, the erstwhile Ministry of Communications entered into deals with Nippon Electric Company Ltd., Japan for purchase of microwave telephone lines;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) whether any allegations of irregularity and malpractice have been received by the Government in this connection;

(d) whether it has been alleged that the present Secretary to the Ministry of Communications was instrumental in giving this contract to NEC, Japan for furthering his own financial interest as well as the interests of some other person or persons outside the Government; and

(e) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GEORGE FER-NANDES): (a) and (b). A global tender enquiry was issued in 1975 for purchasing microwave equipment under IDA credit. Tender offers received from 16 firms were evaluated by a Tender Evaluation Committee. The Committee found the offer of Nippon Electric Company Ltd. (NEC) of Japan to be cheapest as well as technically acceptable. After obtaining the concurrence of the World Bank, an order was placed in 1976 on NEC for the microwave equipment and ancillaries for the 1251