(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to ensure security of workers employed in the company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government has decided the following disinvestment strategy for Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL):

Phase-I: The Khetri unit of HCL along with Taloja plant will be formed into a separate company. The assets of these units will be valued and will form 49% contribution from HCL in a new company in which 51% equity will be injected by a strategic partner.

Phase-IT. The remaining portion of HCL comprising the Indian Copper Complex and the Malanjkhand Copper Project will be restructured by closure of unviable mines in a phased manner with consequent separation of surplus manpower under Voluntary Retirement Scheme. HCL will then look for one more strategic partner for 51% disinvestment in the remainder of HCL.

While approving capital restructuring proposal for HCL in December, 98, the Government has sanctioned a non-plan loan of Rs. 414 crore for separation of surplus employees of HCL under Voluntary Retirement Scheme in a phased manner during 1998-99 to 2001-2002. Infusion of fresh resources by the strategic partner is expected to result in sustained employment for the remaining work force.

Import of Coking Coal

1461. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country's dependency on import of coking coal is increasing;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken by Government towards achieving self sufficiency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) and (b) There is a gap between demand and production of coking and superior grade coal, and the Government is taking steps to close this gap. However, there is only limited scope for this exercise due to the nature and extent of coking coal deposits in the Country. Steel plants are importing coking coal in order to bridge the gap between the requirement and availability of indigenous coking coal and to enhance the quality of overall blend, for improved performance of blast furnace.

Department of Coal does not monitor the import of coal which is on the OGL list. However, as per available information, the details of coking coal imported during the last five years are as under:—

(Data Provisional)

Year	Quantity (In million tonnes)
1994-95	10.15
1995-96	9.37
1996-97	9.78
1997-98	10.65
1998-99	9.64

(c) The following steps have been taken by the Government for augmenting indigenous production of coking coal:

(i) Increasing efficiency and productivity in existing mines by modernisation, application of new technologies and ensuring timely availability of inputs and infrastructural facilities.

(ii) Coal companies have laid emphasis in improving the quality of washed coking coal by setting up two new washeries.

(iii) Partial de-regulation of coal prices is likely to improve internal resource generation of coal companies which will enable new projects to be taken up.

(iv) A scheme under Science & Technology grant is being taken up to examine the feasibility of washing low volatile coking coal acceptable to the Steel Plants at competitive cost.

(v) Private sector companies engaged in production of iron and steel, cement and generation of power have been permitted to take up captive coal mining.