(i) Effective control of cost of production so as to heve an adequate margin for sustained growth.

(ii) Improved manpower planning including redeployment of surplus labour and restricting the intake of new hands against vacancies caused by natural wastage.

(iii) Reduction in manpower through voluntary retirement.

(iv) Concept of 'all men all jobs' is being tried on experimental basis.

(v) Improvement in availability and utilisation of Heavy Earth Moving Machinery by providing adequate workshop support, improved management of spares and timely rehabilitation of equipment.

(vi) Procurement of Heavy Earth Moving Machinery and other equipments is scrutinised closely so that additions to plant and machinery are minimised.

(vii) Special emphasis on underground mines to improve the productivity and profitability.

(viii) Steps taken to maintain better co-ordination with State Governments and also with appropriate authorities for acquisition of requisite land so that the mining activities can be taken up as per schedule.

(ix) Capital expenditure reduction without impairing short term/long term production potential so that impact of interest and depreciation in the future cost of production is minimised.

(x) In coal sales programme of CIL implementation of 'Cash and Carry' scheme and realisation of past dues.

Safeguarding and conservation of Coking Coal

2334. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA. Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that out of 44000 M.T. of production of Coking Coal, only 9 to 10 M.T. is being utilised by Steel Plants after washing and the remaining Coal is being utilised for non-metallurgical purpose causing loss to the nation due to irrational use of valuable Coking Coal for the metallurgical purposes; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to safeguard and conserve the Coking Coal resources of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) (a) and (b) The total production in the country of all varieties of coking coals during the year 1991-92 was 45.90 million tonnes. Out of this, 23.11 million tonnes of metallurgical grades of coking coals were fed to various washeries and the washed product was used in the steel plants. In addition; 1.84 million tonnes of coking coal was used for making hard coke in merchant cokeries and 1.03 million tonne was converted into soft coke. The remaining quantity which did not fall in the acceptable matallurgical category were supplied to the power houses and other users.

The coking coals fed to the washeries are those which exhibit superior caking properties conforming to the technological requirement of the steel plants. Coking coals which are not being fed to the washeries are having low volatile content and are of medium coking variety. With a view to increasing the indigenous availability of washed coking coal required for steel plants, tests have been carried out jointly by Central Fuel Research Institute: Dhanbad and Research & Development

Centre for Iron and Steel; Ranchi on the suitability of such coals for use in the steel plants. Some of these coals exhibit good caking properties afetr they are beneficiated and ash content is reduced to 17-18 per cent. However, these coals are difficult to beneficiate and these cannot be fed to the existing washeries. Once the new washing capacity is estabilshed, it will be possible to utilize a significant proportion of coking coal, which are currently not being fed to the existing washeries.

Lung diseases among miners of SCCL

2335. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large number of miners in Singareni collieries have developed diseases affecting their lungs;

(b) whether it is a fact that lung diseases have become common to workers in this collieries; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to give adequate protection to miners in Singareni colleries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) (a) and (b) As per the information furnished by SCCL, there has been no such incidence of large scale occurence of lung dseases.

(c) The Company takes dust suppression measures including water-apraying in all the places where such problems exist. Periodical medical examinations of workers are conducted regularly and treatment provided in the initial stages itself, after its detection. Dust Surveys are done regularly to monitor the efficiency of the dust suppression arrangements.

Fires in coal mines

2336. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of fires in various coal mines owned by public sector units continue unabated;

(b) what is the status of this problem of fires in coal mines presently;

(c) whether there has been any success in reducing the fires during 1992-93;

(d) whether it is a fact that foreign *experts were called in the matter* and

(e) what steps are being taken to reduce fire hazard in coal mines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (e) Since the first recorded occurrence of fire in Jharia Coalfied in 1916, existence of 70 fires has been reported covering an area of 17.32 sq. kms. After nationalisation of coking coal mines in 1972, concerted efforts have been made to control these fires through the implementation of various schemes for dealing with major fires in the Jharia Coalfield. Total amount sanctioned for these schemes is Rs. 114.57 crores out of which a sum of Rs. 73 crore have already been spent. As a result of these efforts, five fires have been extinguished and the work to contain and control 16 more fires is in progress. Recently the matter was discussed with World Bank for technical and financial assistance. The World Bank has since agreed to finance a Technical Assistance Project for a diagnostic study for development of programme to deal with the coalfield fires. IDA credit for US $ 12 million has recently been approved out of a total envisaged investment of US 14.3 million.